THE FAVORITE

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HOME, AND A SISTER.

BY F. SCARLETT POTTER.

The same bright uplands, and the same dark trees,
The same grey turrets breaking the still blue
The same long windings of the stream he sees
With all he knew

In boyhood; the same playmate at his side,
Who eyes him greedily, as one above
All that a rich world boasts of, in her pride
And sister's love.

She pours her simple babble in his ear,
No grace of subtle fantasies she brings,
But homely gossip of the country near,
Familiar things.

On his tired heart, sick from hot life among
The crush of men, and revel in the halls
Of Venice, soothingly from her mild tongue
Each accent falls.

He takes delight of beauty that can bring
No touch of after-sorrow to the heart;
Of kisses that no burning leave, no sting,
No after-smart.

He will go forth, nor less a man with men
Will be for having known of this calm bliss,
Nor stand in battle with the Turk again
Less firm than this:

Not less but more. As one through the holiday
Journeying, comes where deep-shaded waters lie,
And resting for a little, takes his way
Refresh'd thereby,

So he, for this cool resting-place of home,
Of whose pure fountain he has paused to taste,
With stronger footsteps shall pace forth to roam
Through life's wide waste.

FEUDAL TIMES;

OR,

TWO SOLDIERS OF FORTUNE.

A Romance of Daring and Adventure.

(Translated especially for the FAVORITE from the French of Paul Duplessis.)

"MARIE."

SUMMARY OF THE EARLIER CHAPTERS.

The date of the story is 1581, during the reign of Henry III. of France.

A cloud of mystery hangs over the birth of the Chevalier Sforzi, who, stabbed and deserted in his infancy, has been discovered by a band of free-lances passing through Auvergne, and carried into Italy, where he has been reared by an accomplished and charitable gentleman, whose name he bears in default of one more legitimately his own. On the death of his benefactor, he has returned to Auvergne in the hope of being able to trace his parentage, having reason to believe that he is the offspring of a noble house.

Almost on the day of his arrival in Auvergne, under strikingly romantic and picturesque circumstances, he makes acquaintance with an adventurer of noble lineage, singularly marked character, and bearing the sounding name of Captain Roland de Maurevert. Happily succeeding in vanquishing the captain, in a duel, the adversaries of a moment before become fast friends, and enter into an engagement or companionship in arms which is to last for twelve months, during which time each binds himself to act in behalf of the other's interest at the sole dictation of honor, and absolutely without selfish regard to consequences.

The village in which this compact is made is within the jurisdiction of the Marquis de la Tremblais, who represents the type of a feudal tyrant — the scourge and terror of all coming within the range of his lawless power. Espousing the cause of a noble lady infamously oppressed by the marquis, the chevalier incurs the deadly enmity of that dreaded nobleman, is captured by him, and, in contempt of justice, condemned to an ignominious death. Thanks to his courage and to the loyal aid given him by his companion in arms, Captain de Maurevert, he escapes the doom intended for him, however, and makes his way to the Court of Henry III. at Paris, with the view of seeking redress from the king, not only for his personal injuries, but on account of the wide-spread lawlessness and tyranny of the provincial nobility.

He has, meanwhile, fallen in love with Diane d'Erlanges, the daughter of the Dame d'Erlanges, in whose cause he had incurred the hostility of the Marquis de la Tremblais, and this young lady has also escaped the pursuit of the marquis, and found her way in safety to Paris, but has not as yet rejoined her lover, who is, in fact, ignorant of her being in the same city with himself.

Succeeding after a time in reaching the king's presence, and also in attracting the monarch's favorable notice, he is defeated in his attempt to take advantage of his good fortune by the jealous interference of the Duc de Joyeuse, one of the king's favorites, or *mignons*. He is also unfortunate enough to incur the dangerous enmity of the Duc D'Epernon, another of the favorites of Henry III.

The circumstances under which he has offended the Duc d'Epernon lead to his becoming mysteriously acquainted with a lady of the Court, in regard to whom his position becomes still further environed with embarrassment and danger. It is from this point that this excitingly adventurous story is continued in the succeeding chapters to its triumphant close.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A MYSTERIOUS RENDEZ-VOUS.

This time the captain was not content to wait for him on the threshold of the hostelry, but came forward to meet him.

"My dear friend," he cried, embracing him warmly, "I bring you excellent news. By the memory of that discreet and pleasant rascal, Diogenes!—the proverb, 'to the innocent good comes by handfuls,' is coming to the proof in your case."

"Have you received news of Diane?" cried Sforzi,

"Mademoiselle d'Erlanges!—what the devil! —there's a time for everything! If you find her again, you can love her again; but you have something else to think of now. During your absence, a valet, disguised as a citizen, has been here inquiring about you. I instantly saw through the stratagem, and set to work to get on his blind side. I treated him, and I will do him the justice to say that the rascal behaved himself most gallantly. He was proof against all my pumping, and he drank all the wine I plied him without getting the least tipsy. However, I gathered from one or two words he let slip, that his mistress is one of the most exalted and most virtuous ladies in the kingdom. She must be extremely rich, besides, for the discretion of a valet has to be paid for at an exorbitant price; and this rascal of hers would have stoically allowed his brains to be knocked out without blabbing a word of his secret. Here is a note left by the said rascal for you. Will you please to inform me as to its contents?—for, knowing so little of love affairs as you do, you will now require more experience and tact than you have at command to save you from committing some egregious blunder."

"Captain," replied Raoul, severely, "if you attach the least value to my friendship, never again, I beg, allow yourself to speak with irreverence on the subject of Mademoiselle d'Erlanges! As to this letter, you are welcome to read its entire contents."

"Just as you wish," said De Maurevert. "I am far from disputing the merit of Mademoiselle d'Erlanges. I remember, indeed, having once, for a moment, felt an affection for her myself."

After making this concession to the chevalier's love, the captain hastened to unseal the letter brought by the disguised valet. The missive ran as follows:

"Monsieur le Chevalier, at nine o'clock tonight, a man will present himself at the door of your hostelry, and accost you with the words 'Guise and Italy.' If—which I do not doubt—you have courage, you will allow this man to blindfold and conduct you. I admired your pride this morning; I shall this evening be happy to do justice to your courage."

"Well, chevalier," demanded De Maurevert, after reading this letter, "what do you think of it? It is either the declaration or a snare. It comes either from the beautiful *blonde* or from D'Epernon. What do you intend to do?"

"I shall go, for it concerns the happiness of Diane," replied Raoul, somewhat embarrassed.

"Nothing ventured nothing won, that is certain," replied De Maurevert; "and then, as you so judiciously observe, it concerns the happiness of Diane. Besides—I shall be there."

De Maurevert's eyes at that moment rested on the gold chain of the reliquary given to the chevalier by Mademoiselle d'Assy.

"Ah, ha!" he muttered, in a gay tone, "my dear companion, so rigid this morning, has very quickly changed his way of looking at things. *Tudieu!*—a pretty chain—worth from one hundred and ten to one hundred and twenty crowns! Ah, ha, !—Master Raoul, where Joseph left his cloak, you carry off a chain of gold! *Parbleu!* —I think the comparison is not in favor of Joseph!"

The strangest and most tragic adventures were so frequent in the sixteenth century as not even in the least to arouse public curiosity. The innumerable Italian intriguers, who, seeking to employ to their advantage the power of Catherine de Medicis, their countrywoman, had fallen like a shower of locusts on France, had metamorphosed old Paris into a new Venice. The nights were filled with terrible mysteries.

The contents of the letter received by Sforzi, therefore, astonished neither the young man nor De Maurevert.

At eight o'clock precisely the captain, having finished his supper, moved from the table the stool on which he was seated, and addressing himself to Raoul, said:

"My dear friend, the more I reflect on your rendez-vous, the less uneasy I become. D'Epernon is too cunning to try to trap you on the very day you handled him so roughly. What is infinitely more likely, is that you have captivated the heart of the unknown with the golden locks. Now, trust to my experience in such affairs, Raoul. If you let her see at once that you are too much taken with her"———

"Captain," interrupted Sforzi, "you strangely mistake my intentions. If I have accepted the rendez-vous, it is solely for the purpose of obtaining powerful protection, and in the hope of being enabled to come to the aid of Diane. When one's sole fortune and inheritance is one's honour, one should at least preserve that with care."

De Maurevert received this decisive profession of faith with an impatient shrug. He was about to reply, when his eyes once more rested on the gold chain which mademoiselle had hung about the chevalier's neck. His features expanded, and a mocking smile played about his lips.

"Dear Raoul," he said to himself, "is discretion personified! I will not put him out of temper; one is bound to deal gently with the little failings of one's friends. The important point is that this evening's rendez-vous should result in some substantial gain."

"My dear companion," he went on, addressing Raoul, "since my advice is displeasing to you, I will leave you to your own inspirations. I have myself a certain affair of some importance to attend to this evening. I will only wish you good luck."

De Maurevert rose, put on his sword, placed a pair of pistols in his pockets, threw his cloak over his shoulders, and then went out,

Raoul did not address any question to him, or attempt to stay him.

As soon as he was outside of the Stag's Head, De Maurevert strode away with giant steps, but at no great distance from the hostelry stopped, and, after looking carefully about him, proceeded to conceal himself in a deep doorway.

Nine o'clock was striking as Raoul, in his turn, quitted the Stag's Head. His heart beat violently, and a lively color suffused his face. Hardly had he set foot upon the threshold before a man, disguised in a mask, and wrapped in a large cloak—although the heat was stifling—advanced to meet him, and bowing respectfully, whispered:

"Guise and Italy."

"I am ready, monsieur," answered Raoul, "Will you lead the way?"

"Monsieur," replied the guide, still in a low tone, "allow me, first, to bandage your eyes."

"Give me the bandage; I will tie it on myself," said Raoul.

The guide hesitated.

"Will you give me your word of honor, as a gentleman, that you will bind your eyes fairly?" he asked.

"I give you my word of honor."

The man in the mask handed the chevalier a scarf admirably embroidered, and impregnated with a delicious perfume.

As he had promised, Raoul conscientiously bound the rich tissue about his head.

"Be good enough to give me your hand, and follow me," said the guide.

Although there was nothing, we repeat, extraordinary in such an adventure happening at that period, the chevalier's imagination and curiosity were not the less powerfully excited. He bewildered himself with conjectures and doubts. The fineness and beauty of the tissue with which his eyes were bound, the perfume exhaled from it, the precautions taken by his guide, confirmed him more and more in the conviction that Mademoiselle d'Assy had not been mistaken in assuring him that he had to do with one of the highest and most powerful ladies in the kingdom.

Hardly had Sforzi and his guide gone a hundred paces before De Maurevert quitted his place of concealment, and followed in their steps, with a precaution and address that proved how well used he was to such proceedings.

"By Venus!" he said to himself, "Sforzi is a brave companion! He marches with a pace equally firm to love and battle! If he had had the shade of an idea of my intention to follow him, and watch over his safety, he would have forbidden me point blank! I am a great rascal, I know; but it is not merely the fear of losing the five hundred crowns he owes me, in the event of anything happening to him, that makes me anxious for his safety."

While the captain was indulging in these reflections, Raoul and his guide reached a spot which had even then for many years been known as the Tournelles and since then called the Horse-Market (*Marché-aux-chevaux*). This place, little frequented in the daytime, was a desert at night. It was only by taking infinite precautions that De Maurevert was able to follow unperceived, until the man in the mask reached a small house, before which he halted.

The door of this house was almost instantly opened, and the chevalier, accompanied by his guide, disappeared into the interior.

"The affair is evidently not one of throat-cutting," the captain remarked to himself. "Cupid, and not the savage god Mars, reigns over this quiet retreat. What if I were to leave the ground? No; husbands sometimes follow the example of that villanous Comte de Monsoreau, in his Château of Coulanciere, to assail with superior forces gallant gentlemen whom their wives have preferred to them. A night is soon passed. The weather is magnificent—the temperature warm. I might almost imagine myself encamped on an Italian plain!"

De Maurevert spread his cloak on the grass, drew his pistols from his pocket, and unslung his sword, which he placed within reach of his hand. These preparations made, he loosened his boots a little, and then stretched himself upon the earth with the air of a man perfectly satisfied with himself.

While the captain, with that practical philosophy which was one of the marked traits of his character, was thus keeping his nocturnal watch, a man who had followed him from the Stag's Head, using similar precautions to avoid detection to those which had been employed by De Maurevert in tracking Raoul and his guide, had carefully concealed himself behind a bush at no great distance.

This man having suddenly lost sight of the captain, and believing himself to be alone, quitted his place of concealment, and advanced quietly in the direction of the small house. Unfortunately for the spy, De Maurevert, to use one of his own expressions, knew how to sleep with his eyes open. Thus, this man had scarcely advanced a dozen paces before the captain's ear had detected his movement, and half raising himself, he had noiselessly cocked his pistols.

"*Parbleu!*" De Maurevert said to himself, while trying to pierce the darkness before him, "it is well I determined to *bivouac* on the field of battle! Messieurs de Monsereau are prowling in the neighborhood! I feel quite in the mood to cut up half a dozen of them! So one is coming—and by himself! By my faith, I almost pity his fate! Thousand thunders! Why don't the clouds that hide the moon hide themselves! I like day-light to see my prowess and admire my skill!"

De Maurevert had scarcely finished expressing this wish, before the moon, by a not very extraordinary chance, shone out brightly through a rift in the clouds. Pistol in hand, he sprang instantly upon the spy, whom he observed some eight or ten paces from him, and seized him by the throat.

"Not a word!" he cried, in a low but energetic tone of voice—"not a word, or you are a dead man!"

With such impetuosity was the captain's attack made that the man, even if he had desired to do so, was utterly unable to defend himself.

"Devil's horns!" continued the captain, in the same low tone, "like all jealous husbands, you must be perniciously ugly! Will you oblige me with a sight of your face?"

Without relaxing his grasp upon the throat of his half-strangled victim, De Maurevert twisted him round until the moonlight fell full upon his features. No sooner had he cast his eyes on the visage of his prisoner, than he uttered an exclamation of surprise.

"Is it possible!—you, my brave Lehardy!" he cried.

The old servant of Mademoiselle d'Erlanges made no reply at first—the pressure of the captain's fingers upon his throat having for the moment deprived him of the power of speech. At length, however, the use of his tongue returned to him, and he exclaimed, while the tears poured from his eyes:

"Oh, my poor, dear, good mistress! your presentiments were but too well founded. Monsieur Sforzi is faithless!—a traitor to his vows!"

After giving utterance to these exclamations, and paying no more heed to the presence of the captain than if he had never seen him before, Lehardy rushed from the spot like a madman.

CHAPTER XXX.

"MARIE."

As soon as the door of the little house on the Marché-aux-Chevaux had closed behind them, the chevalier's mysterious guide removed his mask, and informed Raoul that he might now take off the bandage from his eyes.

By the feeble light of a lamp suspended against a wall, Sforzi then saw that he was in a narrow passage, at the end of which was a staircase.

"If you will have the goodness to wait here a moment," said the guide, "I will let my mistress know of your arrival." He went up the stairs, and in a few moments returned and made way for the chevalier.

Raoul, whose curiosity was excited to the utmost stretch, sprang up the stairs and reached a large ante-chamber, the four walls of which were hung with green and gold leather, leaving neither doors nor windows visible.

"Monsieur," said the guide, "my honored mistress, before receiving you, requires your promise that you will allow yourself to be conducted from this place as you were brought to it—with bandaged eyes, and under my care; that after your return to your hostelry, you will not make any attempt to ascertain to what house you have been conducted; and, finally, that you will not repeat to any one in the world anything that passes at the interview she is about to grant you."

"I accept these conditions," answered Raoul.

The sound of a key turning in a lock was heard, the wall opened, and Sforzi was overwhelmed with admiration and astonishment at the strange and unexpected spectacle that met his eyes.

He saw before him a boudoir completely draped and furnished with black velvet, mysteriously lighted by the soft rays of a silver-gilt lamp veiled with rose-colored gauze. A heavy Turkey carpet—a luxury almost unknown at that time in France—covered the floor.

In one of the large arm-chairs which Henry III. had recently brought into fashion, and dressed in black, sat the *blonde* who had spoken so boldly from her carriage to Monsieur d'Epernon.

"Monsieur," she said to Raoul, with a charming smile, "I will not compliment you on the courage you have displayed, in accepting my invitation; I expected as much from you." And, with a graceful motion of her head, pointed out to him a folding seat, such as was then used at Court, and which was placed at a short distance from her own chair.

"To clear your mind of all misapprehension as to the character of this interview," she continued, "I will at once inform you, that if you seriously desire to win my esteem and confidence, you must forget the woman, and see in me nothing but a companion. I have a soul high enough placed, and a heart bold enough to deserve this title."

"Madame," replied Raoul in a voice that slightly trembled while he spoke, "I know too well the smallness of my own merit ever to have thought of regarding this rendez-vous in the manner your words suggest. Nor will I hide from you, madame—and I hope my avowal will assure you as to my intentions—that your incomparable and sovereign beauty is to me as if it had no existence; I shall be insensible to it. The adored image of her to whom I have engaged my faith and affianced my soul, is ever present to my eyes. If you had not called my attention to your beauty, madame, I should not have perceived it."

At this reply, which Raoul thought was perfectly sincere, a scarcely perceptible frown passed over the ivory brow of the beautiful unknown. It was in the gentlest tones, however, and with increased amiability of manner, that she again addressed her visitor.

"Monsieur Sforzi," she said, "I thank you for this avowal; your frankness puts me quite at my ease. Without further delay, then, let us come to the subject of our interview. You have to-day mortally offended Monsieur de la Lavalette. The Duc d'Epernon is implacable in his enmities—he never forgives an injury. The power of this favorite is so great, his credit is so firmly established, that the man against whom he declares himself the enemy must perforce succumb. Chevalier, unless by the improbable interposition of a miracle, you must henceforth consider yourself as lost! An heroic resolution alone can save you. Do you feel that you have—I will not say the courage, for that but faintly expresses my thought—but I will say the will, to enter upon an enterprise, greater and more heroic, perhaps, than any of which history has any example to give?"

"Madame," answered Raoul, after a moment's reflection, "is it an alliance you deign to propose to me?"

"An alliance?—no, monsieur," replied the unknown, haughtily. "What I offer you is support."

"Permit me, madame, I beg, to ask you one question. After painting Monsieur d'Epernon as you have painted him—as an enemy the most to be dreaded—have you yet power sufficient to snatch one of his victims from his grasp?"

"Monsieur Sforzi," returned the unknown, "the mystery with which I have surrounded our present interview will have told you that I do not wish to be known to you. If you had been one familiar to the Court, I should have left you to struggle as you best might against the attacks of Monsieur d'Epernon. It is precisely to your ignorance of men and things that you owe—I will not withdraw the word—my protection. If you greatly wish to link a name with my face, call me Marie. You are still absolutely without guarantee from me as to the confidence, or better yet, the devotion, I ask of you. It is for your sagacity, chevalier, to decide, yes or no, whether you will accept my offers. For myself, I think that a look suffices me to appreciate a person. This morning, during your quarrel with D'Epernon, I judged you at a glance. I should be sorry, Monsieur Sforzi, that any ridiculous feeling of complaisance should induce you to accept lightly an engagement which I wish to be serious—irrevocable. Take your time—reflect well before answering me!"

"Madame," replied Raoul, after a short pause, "I recognize in you a superiority of mind so great and so rare as almost to alarm me. I must, before answering you, beg you to assure me on one point: it is, that your designs are not of a nature to render me guilty of the crime of *lèse-majesté?*"

Sforzi was very far from anticipating the effect produced on the unknown by this question.

By a spontaneous movement, as if she had been bitten by the teeth of a reptile, she sprang from her seat; then, with superb countenance, inspired eye, and voice tremulous with passion, she exclaimed, in a tone of withering contempt:

"Truly, Monsieur Sforzi, I could never have believed that provincial prejudices could so have destroyed in a brave spirit all reasonableness, sense, and feeling of greatness! At the bare thought, not of attacking the royal authority, but only of combating its abuses, of revolting against its disgraces, you stand trembling, pale and overcome! Chevalier Sforzi, men who humble themselves, who bow before prejudice, are born to be mastered. Does not the prospect of a degrading servitude terrify your pride? Royalty—heaven preserve me from speaking ill of it, Monsieur Sforzi; but the king is not royalty—he is only a man!

"You fear to commit the crime of *lèse-majesté*, to attack the rights of the Crown! No rumor of the shameful scandals of the Court has reached your province, then? The rustic squires and bumpkins of the small towns, I can see by your astonishment, know nothing of what is going on in Paris! Well, then, I will tell you, Monsieur Sforzi—and if, after you have heard me, you still persist in your pusillanimity, I will leave you free to go and seek a master, and we shall part never to meet again.

"His Majesty Henry III., Monsieur Sforzi, lives but for Messieurs de Joyeuse and d'Epernon; besides these two *mignons*, nothing exists for him. The people are but a flock of hinds who produce abundant harvests. The nobility, a party of factious persons who cannot be held in too much detestation. Glory, a word signifying fatigue and danger. Would you know how worthily Henry of Valois employs his leisures? He busies himself in discussing the quality of this or that perfume, on the more or less taste displayed in this or that new costume. He pleats his wife's starched collars, dresses his *mignons*, combs his spaniels, eats sweetmeats and sucks oranges. Henry of Valois is a great king, chevalier! I can quite understand the admiration with which he inspires you. Such is this king, the honor of France—what am I saying?—of Christianity!"

The beautiful unknown ceased speaking. The flashing fires presently faded from her eyes, the superb smile of disdain passed from her lip, her voice became low and soft, as, after a while, she continued:

"Forget, I beg of you, Chevalier Sforzi, how I have for a moment suffered myself to be carried away. I love justice and glory so passionately that in thinking of the woes and shames endured by this unhappy kingdom of France, I could not repress the cry of indignation and despair that arose from my heart! Let us bring this useless interview to an end; you are not the man I have dreamed of uniting with my glory."

Without being completely conscious of all that was passing within him, Raoul felt deeply humiliated. All his instincts of youth and ambition were at once inflamed.

"Madame," he cried, "I will leave to the care of the future the opinion you have formed of me; but, believe me, I, too, love glory with fervor! I, too, have dreamed of glory! The unjust power of the great has weighed but too heavily upon my existence; I have insults to avenge, outrages to punish! Madame, I repeat, declare to me, by your hopes of Paradise, that if I put my will and my entire being at your command, you will never call upon me to draw my sword against the king. I am then yours, body and soul!"

If Sforzi had remarked the smile of triumph and perfidy which passed more rapidly than light over the visage of Marie he would instantly have recalled his rash promise.

"Monsieur Sforzi," she replied, after a brief silence, "I gather, from what you have just said, that your pride must have been cruelly stung, your heart must have suffered terribly."

"You have guessed rightly, madame," replied Raoul. "Brave and loyal gentleman as I am, I have been bound to a pillory, struck in the face by the hand of a hangman, and led out for execution on a gibbet! And that, madame, because I had defended a noble lady infamously persecuted—because I had given a blow to a coward whose sword had shamefully rested in its sheath. You can now understand my hatred of feudality, and why I am the devoted champion of royalty! So long as there remains a drop of blood in my veins, so long as my brain can put together two ideas, I will employ my strength and intelligence in fighting against feudality!"

Marie made no reply to this declaration of the chevalier's, but, after a slight pause, said in a gentle tone:

"It is growing late, Monsieur Sforzi. Instead of occupying ourselves with Monsieur d'Epernon, we have wandered to other subjects. The next time we see each other we will endeavor to arrange some plan of action against our common enemy. You must not remain longer here. The same servant who guided you hither will reconduct you. Now that I know your trustworthiness, I shall not use the same precautions that I have thought it necessary to adopt this evening. I only require your promise that you will not make any attempt to discover who I am, and that you will not return to this place without having been sent for."

"I swear to you, madame!—And this invitation—shall I have long to wait for it?"

"As soon as it appears needful for our projects, I will send for you. We will then regulate the conditions of our alliance. The words 'Guise and Italy,' pronounced in a low voice, and accompanied by three knocks, given at equal intervals, will cause the door to be opened to you. Good night, chevalier."

Raoul bowed silently, and took his departure.

(To be continued.)

A MISGUIDED BOOK-AGENT.

A book-agent entered the open door of a snug Pittsfield cottage one day last week, and, nodding to the trim, bright-looking little woman who sat sewing by the window, commenced volubly to descant on the merits of a great work which he was for the first time giving mankind an opportunity to purchase. It was a universal biography, cook-book, dictionary, family physician, short-hand instructor, and contained, besides, a detailed history of every important event that has transpired in the world, from the apple incident and Adam's fall to Credit Mobilier and the fall of Congress. The work contained five thousand chapters, all with running titles. The agent, after talking on the general excellencies of the volume about five minutes, commenced on the headings of those chapters, and as the woman did not say a word to interrupt him, he felt that he was making a conquest, and rattled away so that she shouldn't have a chance to say no. It took him nearly half an hour, and as he breathlessly went on the sweat started from his forehead, and he made convulsive grasps at his collar, and when he finished he had hardly strength enough left to put on a bewitching smile, and hand her his ready pen wherewith to subscribe her name to the order-book. She took the pen, but instead of putting her autograph on his list, she lifted a scrap of paper from her work-box, and wrote in plain letters, "I'm deaf and dumb." He said not a word, but the unutterable things that he looked as he turned to the door would fill a library.

A widow who was terribly afraid of thunder and lightning, every time a storm came on would run into her neighbour's house (he was an old bachelor) and clasp her little hands, and fly around, till the man was half distracted for fear she would be killed. The consequence was that before three thunder storms rattled over his head he had taken her into his house legally bound to him for his whole life.

Ladies' feet appear to grow in Western countries to a gigantic size, corresponding to their developments of nature—as trees, mountains, and garden products. We infer this from two statements in an Omaha journal. In one column it mentions, as a warning, that the sidewalks of the city are full of holes "the size of a lady's foot;" and a little further on we read that a boy of six years old fell into one of these holes. We are sure they cannot have specially small boys at the West, so we are forced to the above conclusion.

IT CANNOT BE.

BY FANNIE WILDWOOD.

It cannot be, that, like a star,
Upon my pathway ye have shone
For one brief moment with thy light,
To leave me thus quivering and lone.
It cannot be!

It cannot be, just as the spring's
Sweet footsteps now again are heard,
That at the bound of thine no more
My inmost being will be stirred.
It cannot be!

It cannot be that the same tongue,
That bears the marks of truth in speech,
Should, with sweet sayings, unto me,
A lesson of despair thus teach—
It cannot be!

It cannot be that heavenly dreams
Should leave their glow upon my mind,
From slumberings sadly to awake,
Only some ivy ruin find—
It cannot be!

It cannot be the massy arch
Of thought, writ on thy stern, broad brow,
Is but the sheltering roof from which
There will escape an unkept vow—
It cannot be!

WHICH WILL SHE MARRY?

BY MARO O. ROLFE.

John Myers loved Florry Castle, the prettiest and the most bewitching girl in Boroville, a place noted far and wide for the beauty and intelligence of its ladies.

Florry's father was the wealthiest merchant in town and John was his clerk.

Now, do not imagine that I am going to repeat the oft-told story of the penniless youth who loved a princess; for if you do, you will be disappointed. John was Florry's equal in everything save in one respect. While she was the most careless, romping, fun-loving young lady in the world—she had attained to the mature age of seventeen—John was the most diffident fellow conceivable, blushing like a girl at everything, always appearing, he fancied, as bashful people are apt to, at the greatest disadvantage whenever he attempted to put his best foot forward, and doubly awkward he thought, whenever he essayed to utter more than the commonest of common-place expressions to Florry.

Surely he was not handsome, in the general acceptation of the term. Tall, angular, almost awkward at times, there was very little of gracefulness about him, it is true, and his greatest sensitiveness led him to think these little disadvantages infinitely more conspicuous than they really were. But Florry, overlooking all this and seeing only his blue eyes and wavy brown hair, clustering about a broad, high brow, white as marble—pleasant enough things to look upon, surely—noting his constrained, diffident manner when in her presence, and his many odd little attentions to herself and her wishes, and discerning his great love for her through all, at last began to pity him heartily for his want of confidence in himself; and we all know to what tender passion pity is akin.

Once he heard her express a wish to read a book, the last new novel. It was not for sale in Boroville, and he wrote to the publishers, directing them to mail it to Florry's address.

When he came to dinner one day, she sat near a window, turning over the leaves, with the bright sunlight falling in a mellow glow upon her queenly little head. She looked lovelier than ever just then; and he tried hard to keep back the flush that mantled his face as he saw her for the first time in the enjoyment of his anonymous gift.

"Oh, John," she cried, with a pleasant look in her face that did his heart good, "you know how I have longed to read 'Charlie's Bride,' and now some good fairy has made me twice glad by sending it to me. I'm sure it must have been Mrs. Chester. She's always so thoughtful, and she said she'd not forget me when she returned home."

"I'm very glad you've got the book, Florry," he said simply, but in a strange, constrained sort of way that made her look up.

"Why, John," she said, "does anything trouble you?"

"No, Florry," with half-averted face, "why do you ask?"

"Because———"

"Because what, Florry?"

"Nothing." Then changing the subject, and with a quick, shy glance up into his face: "The book is splendid, John. I could bless the one who gave it!" Then obdurately: "Mrs Chester is very kind."

Mrs. Chester still. John turned away.

And so matters went on for a full month, and then Casper Ducey came to Boroville, astonishing all with his handsome face and attire, his lavish expenditure of money, his fast horses, his fast driving and his fast life altogether. He was a thorough man of the world, dashing, brilliant, fascinating; and, as far as external appearances went, wealthy; and external appearances go a great way in such a place as Boroville.

Mrs. Digby approved of Casper Ducey. Mrs. Digby was an oracle in Boroville. She was a handsome woman of five and twenty, a lively young widow, whose second mourning became her charmingly, and who, some people said—but some people are not to be relied on to any great extent, you know—would not be particularly averse to trying the marital yoke again, so lightly had she borne it, with a suitable partner, of course. In company with her late husband, the widow had spent several seasons at the various places of summer resort, besides passing a winter at the capital; and she was considered infallible authority on all matters relating to society at large. She was pretty, intelligent, dressed in excellent taste, and was believed to have a snug little fortune all her own. So you see, she was a very nice little bit of femininity, as the world would say. Quite a little company of the *élite* of the village assembled in the widow's parlor one evening, and Mr. Ducey was the subject of their conversation.

"Yes, Mr. Ducey is a very desirable gentleman," said the widow. "We must welcome him to our circle. He is handsome, witty and accomplished, and—and of course he is rich; but that don't matter so much, you know. We met him at Newport three years ago — poor, dear Harry and I." And she gave her handkerchief a very uncertain twirl, that left the shadow of a doubt in the minds of some of her listeners whether it was intended as an evidence of her incontrollable sorrow, at the remembrance of her "poor, dear Harry," or to attract the attention of Tom Lacy, who was flirting outrageously with Mabel Townley, at the further side of the room. And so Casper Ducey had a passport to the society of Boroville, and was received with open arms.

"How do you like him, Florry?" John Myers asked one afternoon, as Mr. Ducey whirled past the window in a basket phaeton, nodding gracefully to Florry, and then turning to make some witty remark to Mrs. Digby, who occupied the seat at his side. The widow laughed, showing every one of her white front teeth to the fullest extent of propriety. She was exultant and her face showed it; and John and Florry and Mr. Ducey saw it; and John and Florry smiled, and so did Mr. Ducey—in a quiet, gentlemanly sort of way,

"Oh, I like him exceedingly well," said Florry, in reply to John's question. "He spent last evening here, and he's going to take me out in the morning for a ride to the lake with that splendid turnout of his. How delightful!"

"Which?" almost savagely — "Ducey or his horses?"

"Both, to be sure;" then saucily, "What a stupid you are, John. I meant the ride."

Florry rode with Casper Ducey the next morning and many mornings thereafter; and John Myers and the widow grew jealous. Ducey became Florry's constant attendant, accompanying her to concerts and parties, and taking her for boat rides on the lake and long drives over the pleasant country roads. They walked together, sung together, danced together. In short it came to be a notable fact that Florry Castle and Mr. Ducey were very deeply in love with each other, or were flirting beyond all propriety. He brought her flowers and music, and read poetry to her in his rich, clear voice—by and by he made love to her in the same voice. To say that Florry was not charmed with her brilliant cavalier would be in direct opposition to the facts of the case. All thoughts of poor John Myers were, for the time being, vanished from her mind. She had no time now for odd little chats with him, as of old—perhaps the inclination was wanting also. John became desperate, and resolved one evening to tell her all. He could no longer stand silently by and see matters go on as they had been going for a few weeks past.

He found her alone in the parlor.

"Florry!" half fearfully.

"Why, John!" with a little start of surprise. "You have been so shy of me of late. So you have not forgotten me quite?"

"Forgotten you, Florry!" There was a world of reproach in his earnest voice. "I shall never forget you. "I—"

"I hope not, John," she interrupted. Maybe she apprehended what he might have said. "I have something to tell you, John. To-day I promised to marry Casper Ducey."

She was cruel, and she knew it. It is best so, she thought, he must know it some time.

"And you love him, Florry?" after a long pause.

"Yes," without looking up.

"Better — better than you could ever love me?"

"I—I think so, John."

His face was pallid, and his voice trembled as he said:

"Then God bless you, Florry, and make you happy. I wish you all joy and peace, now and hereafter!"

Never till this moment had she comprehended the full depth of John Myers' love. How nobly self-sacrificing he was—this man who could thus give his heart's idol up to another, because he thought she would be happier with him. What a world of anguish those few words cost him none could comprehend but himself and another—One that reads all our hearts How she pitied him as she thanked him for his kind wishes.

He toiled patiently on at the old, monotonous drudgery in the counting-room, striving to crush his wild, unavailing love, to drown it amid the ceaseless cares of business.

The widow Digby, tired of her futile fishing for the "great catch," as she mentally styled Ducey, put a fresh bait on her hook, and cast her line for Tom Lacy; and as the latter gentleman's heart had long since become enslaved by her pretty brown eyes, he was a comparatively easy victim. Then the widow exulted over little Mabel Townley, who did not care a straw for Lacy, and was satisfied in the proud consciousness that she had a lover at any rate.

After a while, the Borovillians arranged to have a grand picnic in Crimp's grove, a mile out of town. Of course all—that is, all who belonged to the "circle," were expected to attend. "The Quimbys, the Brodalles, the Thomases, and Mr. Ducey and Florry and Tom Lacy, besides Dr. Granton and his cousin Miss Ellis, and ever so many more, are going," said the widow, "and we shall have such a splendid time."

"Of course you will go, John," said Florry.

"Oh, Florry, I cannot."

"Why?"

"Because—because"—hesitatingly, "I have business of importance to attend to at the store."

"Oh, but you must go, John," persuasively. "It will be the last picnic of the season, and—and you know I am going away soon. Casper insists on my naming an early day for our marriage, and you must go just this once, for my sake; and you need recreation—you are working too hard."

And so he promised to drive over to the grove about the middle of the afternoon—"in time to partake of the refreshments and come home with the rest," he said. Why Florry insisted on his going, she scarcely knew. Maybe she thought he was working himself to death, for he had been looking unusually pale and thin, of late.

At last the all important day came, as most days do, and an eventful day it was, to three at least. Just after dinner the picnic party took up their line of march to the grove, looking not unlike a battalion of hotel waiters, laden as they were with plates and platters, cakes and biscuits, and all the other things that go to make up the delicious array that we see spread out on a picnic table, to please the eye and tempt the palate.

Florry waited a long time for Mr. Ducey. He came at last very late, offering no excuse for his want of punctuality, and acting, she thought, very strangely altogether.

He seemed in unusually good spirits that day, however, and all unpleasant thoughts were banished from her mind long before they came in sight of the grove, with its gay banners fluttering merrily from the wide-spreading boughs, and the jolly party gathered in happy groups here and there, or wandering in couples through the shady labyrinths that extended on every side, showing transient views, through the swaying foliage, of the green hills beyond.

By and by John Myers came, looking flushed and heated; but whatever was passing in his mind, he maintained an outward calm.

"I'm so glad you've come!" said Florry. "We're enjoying ourselves finely."

Just then word came that the refreshments were ready.

"There's Mab Townley over there, John, and she looks lonely. Go and wait on her to the table," and the little witch fluttered off, leaving him no alternative but to obey.

The company were just taking their places at the refreshment stands, and Florry stood quite still, looking anxiously around for her escort, who had excused himself a half hour before, and had not yet returned. Five minutes more slipped by, and still he did not come. She felt grieved and mortified. He had never been so neglectful of her before. What could be the matter?

"Where is Mr. Ducey?" some one asked.

His protracted absence was now for the first time generally noticed.

"Yes, where is he?" from a chorus of voices.

"What have you done with your cavalier, Florry?" Mabel Townley broke in. "You must learn to take better care of him in the future."

"He is old enough to take care of himself," said Florry lightly, yet with a red flush on either cheek.

"Very true," whispered Mrs. Digby confidentially to Tom Lacy. "He's five and thirty, if he's a day. To think of such a chit of a girl as Florry Castle marrying a man old enough to be her father—the very idea?"

Mr. Lacy, as in duty bound, agreed with everything the enchantress said.

"We must find him," said somebody. "He may have met with an accident."

And a dozen of the party hastened off in various directions through the grove in search of Casper Ducey. One of the girls found him out at last, as a little scream attested, and they were all around him in a moment.

He was lying prostrate on the ground, just within the shelter of a little thicket not far away, with his eyes closed and his face looking swollen and purple.

"What is the matter?"

"Is he dead?"

"He's in a fit!"

Three or four of the girls screamed in a breath; the gentleman looked at him hard then at each other, but said nothing. Dr. Granton glanced at the red, bloated face, then ruefully at Florry.

"Speak!" she cried, with pale lips. "Is he dead?"

"Florry, the Dr. replied kindly, "it is best to use plain language. Mr. Ducey is drunk!"

She was silent a moment, standing motionless as marble, staring into vacancy, like one in a dream. Then the pallor in her face gave place to a hot, angry flush, and her black eyes flashed as she said:

"And this is true?" There was no denial, and she went on: "Then he is dead to me. I never wish to look upon his face again. I want him to know how utterly I scorn him after what has happened. Give me a pencil and a bit of paper, John. I will write a few lines for him to read when he comes out of his stupor; then I wish you would take me home."

She had finished in a moment.

"You shall all hear it," she said, bravely, "It is not a love letter!"

And she stood up in the midst of the excited throng, whose eyes were all fixed eagerly on her resolute little face, and read what she had written:

"MY DUCEY—I scorn and detest you! I never want to see you again!

FLORENCE CASTLE."

It was very brief, very concise; but it answered Florry's purpose—it was to the point. She bent over and drew something from the breast-pocket of his coat. It was a small flask. Then she rolled the paper up and thrust it through a dainty little ring, which she had slipped from her finger. Next she drew the stopper, and after emptying the contents upon the grass, replaced it with the roll of paper. Then she put the flask back where she had found it.

"He will discover it there soonest," she said simply. "Come, John, we will go now."

The grove was deserted in a few minutes, and Casper Ducey, in his drunken slumber, was its sole occupant.

They never saw him again. His reign was over. One of the places that knew him once knew him no more, and that place was Boroville.

What John and Florry said that afternoon, as they rode home, we will not attempt to conjecture, but certain it is that Mr. Castle gave his sanction to their betrothal that very night. And so John won Florry after all.

CHINESE CALIGRAPHY.

In numerous instances the customs of the Chinese are diametrically opposed to our own, and this remark applies especially to their writing and reading. We right our letters in horizontal lines from left to right, and print our books in the same manner; the Chinese, on the contrary, write in perpendicular lines from right to left, so that what is the last page of a book or letter with us is the first with them. They never use punctuation marks, while we pay great attention to that part of our letters. We write our names more or less legibly at the end of our notes and letters; the Chinese sign with a cipher, which every man adopts for himself, being a few characters combined in a complicated manner into one. Another mode of attestation is by affixing the stamp of a seal, not in wax, but in red ink. The Chinese attach much consideration to the graphic beauty of their written character, and make use of inscriptions for ornamental purposes, as may be seen on the specimens of porcelain brought to this country. The advantage of simplicity—and a very great advantage it is—constitutes the merit of our alphabetic writing, but that of variety and picturesque effect may fairly be claimed by the Chinese. The importance of caligraphy as an accomplishment is naturally esteemed more highly among them than it is in Europe; and large ornamental inscriptions or labels are frequently exchanged among friends, or used, as pictures are among us, for purposes of taste and decoration. The Chinese spend much time and labor over the acquisition of a neat and elegant handwriting. They have six different styles of writing their characters, but only two of these are studied by most Chinese. Great care is taken in teaching school-boys to write neatly; the Chinese student is very particular about his pen and ink, and he is even fanciful on the subject of the ink-slab on which the latter is carefully rubbed with a little water. These pens (or, as they are sometimes called, "pencils") rather resemble our camel-hair brushes; the handle of the pen is of bamboo, and each pen has a little case or sheath of bamboo or metal to protect the hair from injury, for the tip of the pen is so fine that care has to be taken to keep it in good order for writing with. The ink is made from lampblack, etc., mixed with glue and similar substances, and is always scented with musk. The cakes are often adorned with curious devices and short sentences, stamped in gilt and colored characters. The ink-slab is made of different kinds of stone, carefully ground smooth, and has a small cavity or depression at one end to hold water; but some students have a species of small cup placed beside them with a little water in it. This cup is sometimes handsomely carved out of a piece of jade-stone, and fitted on to a wooden stand; it is furnished with a small ladle not unlike a salt-spoon. Nearly all paper in China is made from the woody fibre of bamboo, and is mostly of a yellowish color; it has no strength and is very easily torn, and the effect of water upon it is much the same as upon blotting paper. Yet with these, to us, unpromising materials, the Chinese writer contrives to produce characters which for regularity and symmetry cannot be surpassed.

NEARLY all nations have a proverb to this effect:—"That we ourselves make our greatest sorrows." If we look honestly into our hearts we shall see that it is indeed so. We yield to temptations, and fall into sin. Surely as the thunder follows the lightning, sorrow must follow sin, even in this world.

ONE WOMAN'S MISSION.

BY EMILY H. MOORE.

CHAPTER I.

Mrs. Erma Haywood, *née* Miss Erma Morrison, clad in the brown linen suit of a business woman, sat reading proof in a dingy office one fine afternoon in June. The street below her one window was bright with beauty and fashion setting out in the afternoon tide of shopping, and riotous with the roll of carriages, the rumble of horse-cars, the shouts of newsboys, the not unmusical cries of flower and fruit venders, and all busy and lifeful sounds which go to make up what is termed the "roar" of a big city.

It did the heart of this lonely toiler good to hear these sounds. Her eyes, running alertly down the slender sheets of proof, arresting every letter that dared to stand on its head, brightened, and her brows, that had curled themselves into a frown over a whole paragraph of spavined syntax, straightened themselves into their usual level serenity as there rose above the cheerful uproar some wild, fresh shouts of "*E—vening Times—ee!*" for this was the signal indicating that her day's labor was nearly ended. Only a few more columns of somewhat tame matter for the morrow's miscellany, and the last letter from the special Paris correspondent—who was happily brief—and she could take her brown gipsy down from its methodical peg, her parasol from another methodical peg, and go——

I was about to say "home," but this would be untrue. She could go to her boarding-place. Which is vastly unlike going home.

Mrs. Erma, aged twenty-seven, although obliged to read proof and stay in a boarding-house, was not a dismal person to look at. There was an inner light in her face, which told of life-forces still in reserve; a look of resolute cheerfulness, as if a bubbling spring of hope centered in her soul, kept existence fresh and green amid the Sahara of her surroundings.

All her days—which are many when one has passed her twenty-seventh June—had led, as a general thing, through dusty paths; paths, to be sure, whose dust had sometimes been well laid with tears. Her childhood was a brief one, and, brief as it was, had been little given to the sportive and careless idleness natural to that period of life. She could scarcely remember when she had been without care. Looking very, very far back, she could recall a time of climbing roses, and singing birds, and sunshine on a yellow floor—sunshine whose glory refused to be gathered by her chubby hands. Then, more distinctly, came a period of blue skies and dewy uplands, when she went barefooted and bonnetless, and tended the cows—giant animals, that towered above her young head, and could have crushed her, had they chosen, under their great hoofs; but good giants, that, so far from crushing her, shrank and retreated before her brave little menaces and valiant shouts like so many giant cowards, wheeling away from the sweet-smelling corn-field by which she stood guard, and returning to the lesser delights of the close-bitten clover, accelerated, in extreme cases, by a little mongrel dog, who never left the side of his young mistress.

Even that far-away life had not been without its tragedies; for one day a wild and worried mother-heifer, lately added to the herd, tore one of her sharp horns through the breast of the too-officious dog, and he dragged himself to Erma's feet, only to lie down and die. Then for the first time she felt what death is when it touches something beloved; and the first shadow of a life that has much of shadow stole over her blithe heart.

The cow-tending days, with their blue skies and dewy fields, passed away. Then came a fearful time of frantic but brief childish mourning over a mother lying very white and still, and refusing to speak to her; of a mother being borne off in a close box, and put away in the black ground to the singing of doleful hymns. How far away it seemed! Then the little brown feet took on the dignity of shoes, and the little girl herself was whirled away to a new distant home, and a new life began.

How much she had lived in all the twenty years intervening between the proof-reading woman and the little herds-girl on the mountains! A sunny, kindly home had been hers. From its portal she had gone forth a bride, as light of heart—and as light of head—as the butterfly fresh from the chrysalis, abandoning herself in her sanguine youthful content to this first love of her heart—never knowing—as she came to know in later years—that it was only the *avant-courrier* of the royal love to come. It had not proved a felicitous marriage, exactly. Erma was a woman, and she liked to be petted and sheltered after the selfish manner of women. This was well enough. But, unfortunately, her handsome, white-handed husband possessed the same wants. He was not an "oak"—poor Percival Haywood—for any woman-vine to cling to; and when a vicious stroke of fortune scattered his comfortable inheritance to the four winds, he could not take to farming like a hero; or to book-keeping like a brave slave. But he took to something more devilishly worse—drink! And the drink was not long in erecting an inexpensive head-stone over all that was left of her "poor boy," as Erma tenderly and compassionately called him to the last.

Widowed, now, and once more homeless—for her adopted mother's family was so scattered by death and his assistant, marriage, it no longer afforded a nucleus for her to cling to, even had she been willing to cling—she was beating about the world, arduously taking care of herself.

It was not so bad, she thought. She had known heavier and more blighting care than this care of Erma Haywood. Why, she hardly gave her more trouble than did the cows in those old, old days on the mountains—the velvety-green mountains of Vermont.

Sometimes, to be sure, it seemed as if her dresses wore out or became *passé* needlessly fast, and that her plain but neatly-served dinners, at the hands of Mrs. McAfferty, amounted to extravagant Saturday payments. But in the main, the care of herself was maintained without much murmuring. It might have been so much worse, you know! If she had been compelled to be a laundress, and live constantly in a vile atmosphere of suds; or an automatic woman-clerk, having to stand with aching feet behind counters and sweetly smile and smile to heartless shoppers; or a poor old char-woman, scrubbing and scouring under the feet of the proud world; or——

Oh! yes, many things might have been so much worse than sitting in this high, sunny room, away up in the pure air, that, if the breeze was right, came puffing into her face and fluttering the sheets of proof, and kissing with the kiss of a welcome lover the one little red rose that grew in the window and sweetened the room with its sensuous summer-breath.

So it was this grateful appreciation of the good that was hers that kept her eyes clear and bright, and her brow unthreaded by the lines which discontent and fruitless envy like to trace on the brows of too many mortals.

Then, too, her mission would come to her by and by. This was a perpetual soul-tonic. Her mission had haunted her long—a vague and nebulous thing, as yet. Medicine, Theology, Art, Literature—all hovered over her like gently-contending angels, but not one had yet claimed her for its own. Often it appeared to her that the lecture-field demanded her labors; and as often there seemed to be something drawing her to the rigorous halls of surgery. At times she would preach; and again, some very fair lines, lurkingly signed "E. H.," would get into newspaper corners, and it would seem that Poesy was setting about weaving a crown for her. Something she would do! and the world should be a little better for her living in it.

Meantime, while the mission was getting ready to announce itself, she read proof and was glad enough of the work. It was a position that had cost effort—this position on the staff of the mighty *Times* forces. It had been achieved after varied failures and disappointments in outreachings for governessing, sewing, copying, clerking, and all those branches of work to which intelligent and refined women are sometimes forced to turn. The rebuffs she met had been enough to disgust and terrify a less plucky applicant. Mrs. Snipcat could not engage her as teacher for her bullet-headed cherubs without references; Miss Ostrichtip wanted experienced hands to trim her hats; and one horrid lawyer to whom she came modestly and appealingly for papers to copy, told her she was too pretty for such drudgery, and then attempted to kiss her on the spot. To the credit of our brothers and husbands be it said that this lawyer was very drunk, else he had not acted so meanly toward one who was powerless to knock him down.

After all this, and much more, the dingy little room near the roof of the *Times* establishment, opened to her like a beautiful calm haven to the ship that has shivered and tossed long days on the stormy outer sea. So many natures might have grumbled even here, cursed the spitefulness of "fate," and the meanness and narrowness of such existence. But Erma was grateful, and found good things in proof-reading. She held communion with vigorous minds, and kept pace with the newest thoughts. Dainty rhymes, fresh from the poet's brain, were laid, like flowers, on her table, and scintillant things from the workers in science dazzled and charmed her in her practical work of making letters stand on their feet and the different fonts remember their places. Close, laborious, and sometimes irksome labor — when sun and breeze and sea-beach were calling to her from the beautiful outside; but with all its faults, she loved it, and was faithful to it.

And now on this late midsummer day, as the tongue of some deep-toned bell—that would be heard through all the tumult—slowly boomed out the hour of five, up came the "dummy" with the rushing alacrity that characterized everything pertaining to the great daily, and across the slips of paper were these welcome words, "Last proofs," in the foreman's hurried but incisive hand. Half an hour later, Erma was walking briskly the long beat in the direction of Mrs. McAfferty's.

Erma had one weakness—a weakness for the Nice. And this, in a poor, hard-working heroine, was a weakness indeed. Two streets away she might have had "board" with a saving of half her earnings; but it was not a nice place. Green water stood in the gutter, and there was a lager-beer saloon over the way. Oh! no, it couldn't be thought of.

At Mrs. McAfferty's two noble elms stood in front of the large house, with its neat but sorrowful air of departed glory; the street was sprinkled, the door-plate was of silver, the neighborhood made up of quite well-behaved residences, and her little room in the third story—it would have been in the fourth if there had been any fourth—with meals and clean clothes, left her, per week, three whole dollars for dress and incidental—or rather accidental—expenses. At times she shuddered over her extravagance, and told herself that it could not go on. Whatever was she to do when that Rainy Day should come? How many fall suits and dear, nice ruffled skirts and buttoned boots and Alexandre gloves was she to buy with the slowly accumulating capital of three dollars a week, with nosegays and fresh fruit tempting her every day of her life, and new books appealing to her from every bookseller's window?

To-day, eluding all these appeals, and meditating how she would amuse herself by darning her gloves until tea-time, Erma walked homeward. As she drew near the somewhat abrupt steps that led to the hall-door, a little figure in a dotted lawn dress, with stockings and pinafore a little the worse for an afternoon's wear in Mrs. McAfferty's back-yard, came tumbling headlong down the descent, landing with fearful force on its face. Neither party screamed; for the one never screamed and the other was past screaming. Erma rushed forward and caught the child in her arms, regardless of the blood that gushed, from the cut forehead and the bumped nose, all over the bosom of her neat linen dress, sent from the laundry only the day before. Her cheeks paled as she carried the limp little figure up the cruel stone steps into the open hall. A small boy of three years, slowly descending the staircase, caught sight of her and the gory little face on her breast, and immediately set up that dreadful howl which frightened small boys with good lungs are so capable of.

"Nannie tilled! O——h! Nannie ti——lled!" he roared; and turning, fled up-stairs on all fours repeating his cry with renewed vigor at every breath.

Erma followed him, hoping that Mr. Midsummer—the father of these interesting children—would meet her at the next landing and take this shockingly-bumped child out of her sight. The little boy fled on before her, dashed into his father's parlor, ran on into the bed-room, and scuttled under the bed, still roaring.

Erma saw at a glance that the father was not at home.

"Bernie," she said rather sternly, "Nannie is not killed. Only hurt. Go tell somebody to come. Go call Mrs. McAfferty, there's a darling!" softening toward him, as his little red, affrighted face showed itself once more.

As he departed with subdued blubberings, Erma sat down in a low rocker, with the ice-pitcher at her side, and began bathing the child's face—her heart going out to the motherless, carelessly-dressed little mite in a sudden gush of pitying tenderness, so that there were tears standing on her cheeks, and caressing words trembling on her lips — as Mr. Midsummer, not having encountered Bernie, came slowly and abstractedly up-stairs, with the *Times* and the last *Blackwood* in one hand and a pot of mignonette in the other, and stopped, with an exclamation of alarm, in the open door.

Erma looked around,

"I am glad you have come. She fell down those abominable steps. Don't be frightened! Her neck's not broken, nor her head. She is only stunned a little. Please don't! I can do this best," for the papers and mignonette were pitched together on the lounge, and he was going to gather the little girl right up against his snowy marseilles vest, and Erma involuntarily thought of laundress's bills.

"Poor little Nan!" he exclaimed; but he let her remain where she was, and then began turning about helplessly and aimlessly, as most men do in domestic accidents of this kind.

"See, she is coming to herself of her own accord," said Erma, as the child shuddered a little under a fresh application of cold water. "If you could bring me a towel or two and the wash-basin, Mr. Midsummer, and then send somebody for Dr. Perry, just round the corner, you know — though maybe she doesn't need him, but it may be best — and a little fresh water in the basin, please, and a clean apron."

Mr. Midsummer, recovering from his bewilderment, responded to these demands very deftly, and assisted Erma in removing the bloody little dress with fingers as white and nimble as her own. That done, Nannie began to cry, and to resist the odious, cold, sopping handkerchief, calling it a "nasty thing!"

"Hang Dr. Perry!" cried Mr. Midsummer joyfully. "Don't you see she is all right? Hey, Nannie! D—ear little birdie! Papa's own lady!" and kneeling beside her to kiss her bruised forehead, his cheek touched for an instant Erma's cool, soft hand.

Something shot from that cool, soft hand into his heart. He lifted his face, and for the first time saw the tears on Erma's cheek, the great blood-stains on her breast. He had noticed her at table; she sat near the foot, in what she called the Bohemian department, while he was far removed from her and more directly under the smiles of Mrs. McAfferty, who dispensed tea at the head. He had noticed her as a somewhat preoccupied woman, possessed of the daintiest manner of handling broiled chicken (on those red-letter broiled-chicken days), and a monotonous habit of wearing geranium leaves in her belt. He had noticed and thought of her so little that he could not now recall even her name.

"Madam, I—a—you are very kind!" he exclaimed rather vehemently.

"I am glad to have been of assistance—if I have been," said Erma.

"Your dress is ruined," he said dolorously.

"It will wash," cheerfully, yet involuntarily thinking of the dollar "out," which the washing and ironing of its many tucks and bias-bands implied.

At this moment the small boy, Bernie, still faintly sobbing, was heard ascending the stairs in his usual four-footed fashion, and at the top he said. "Miss Cafferty gone out; Kate tummin," and then he hurled himself into his father's arms, and ventured a look at his still rather gory sister. Kate was half a minute behind him, with the appearance of having recently removed her hands from biscuit-making. She came in frantically, and not without reason, for Bernie assured her that Nannie had fallen and "boke her head wight open, and was all covered wis bud."

"Only a terrible bump, Kate," said Erma; "but I think the little lady must have tea in her room to-night, and she won't be pretty for several days. You'll please take away these things and bring up some fresh water, and we'll be all right again," in a brisk voice that seemed to carry all-rightness in its every intonation—at least, so it seemed to Mr. Midsummer.

And now that the bruised forehead was nicely bandaged in a wet towel, the nose assuaged, and the clean dress adjusted, it was discovered that fresh stockings were needed, and that the little blue slippers peeping out of Mr. Midsummer's, on the not very tidily-brushed hearth, would be better for the child's comfort than the high-heeled buttoned boots which Erma indignantly declared were enough to hurl her down stairs every day of her life.

It is a risky business for a man and a woman—unless already safely anchored in their respective lovings—to set about pulling off a child's stockings and shoes together. Midsummer found it so. There was something inexpressibly tender in the co-partnership. And when Erma, in her impulsive way, caught little Nannie's foot to her lips and kissed it, he felt his heart-beats quicken slightly. It had been so long since a woman's hands had helped him in this way—so long since womanly kisses had been uttered so near him!

Suddenly Erma gave Nannie into Midsummer's arms and moved toward the door. She would like to get her gloves darned in time for a walk before night should come down.

"I am greatly obliged to you, Miss——"

"Mrs. Haywood," supplied Erma, smilingfor giveness for his forgetfulness, and adding, "You won't, of course, permit her to go to sleep," in a tone that said, "I hope you are not so stupid." The child's head was drooping heavily on Midsummer's breast. "Get her interested in play—give her some wine—toddy! She had better become a little inebriated than drop off in that stupor. Excuse me for taking on medical airs, please," and she was about to vanish, when her eyes fell on the inverted pot of mignonette.

"The poor little weed—how grieved and surprised it is at such treatment!" she exclaimed, placing it in the window. The curtains were twisted back in ungraceful lines—she shook them out into airy folds. An ivy, perched on a bracket near at hand, was vainly reaching after a dangling bit of twine—she assisted it to the coveted support. A lovely little sunset piece lacked a hair's breadth of hanging "plumb"—she righted it with a touch. All this in half a moment, yet the room seemed somehow to be restored to harmony. Then with a "Pardon these liberties," she went away, and Midsummer listened to her footfalls as she went, not flying up-stairs after the insane manner of most women, but stepping deliberately, like one who had plenty of stair-climbing and knew enough to take it easily.

Midsummer listened, and missed something from the room—a bit of his heart.

"What a bright, sensible face!" he exclaimed.

"What say papa?" said Nannie.

"I was speaking to myself, birdie!"

"Oh!" said Nannie.

Erma, in the back room, second floor, was impressed with the idea that she had forgotten something. But no; her gloves were in her pocket, her hat still on her head, her parasol methodically hung up. What could it be? She would not acknowledge it, but I will tell you—a bit of her heart.

"A fine, clear face. A little sad—but so brave and strong!" she pensively murmured, removing her hideously stained basque and putting it into the bath-tub

CHAPTER II.

The second "gross error" had occurred in Erma's proof. Jackson, the assistant foreman, whose casual acquaintance was the only link between herself and the high and mighty powers of the sanctum, told her with all the severity he could bring to bear upon so gentle and prepossessing a woman, that in their establishment eternal vigilance was the price of a situation, and that one more error of the kind would unavoidably result in her dismissal. Erma listened, a natural flash of resentment at being scolded at firing up her eyes, but bowing to the higher power and saying she would try, as she had always tried, to do her best. When she was alone she dropped her head in her hands for a moment, not crying or even tearful, but just a bit discouraged.

The day of the fatal third gross error arrived. A masterly article from the pen of a great-hearted philanthropist, evidently, for he brooded over the poor as a hen broods over her helpless little chicks; and Erma, as she read, felt her heart beat with grateful sympathy. Too much sympathy, for her eyes began to leap along the lines, and as they swiftly took in the author's thought, left in one column a capital S standing on its head and a comma weakly trying to fill the place of a period; while in another—O fated Erma!—a short paragraph was "skipped" altogether. In that paragraph the author had put the question—"Now, how shall we reach these miserable masses?" The printer missed one little letter, and the question glared out in the clear, leaded types—"Now, how shall we reach these miserable asses?"

Was it not enough to irritate a saint—had a saint been the author? The inverted S was forgiven, even the misplaced comma evoked but a frown; but when the author of "The Poor in our Large Cities" found himself calling these same unfortunate people "miserable asses," he sprang to his feet and sought the publishers—bearding them in their own sumptuous den—and pointed out the hideous blunder with a finger rigid with just indignation.

"Really, this is too bad!" said the firm in one voice. "We'll see who is at fault and have him dismissed at once. We've been annoyed twice this season in this way. We regret this exceedingly, Midsummer! It's a shocking error." Yet, in spite of their regret, the firm covertly laughed in their sleeves. There was something slightly ludicrous about the blunder, which the author's irritation rather enhanced.

"Shocking? It's infamous!" and Midsummer, the author of "Our Poor," etc., cast the copy of the *Times* upon the floor as if it had stung him. "Not even space for an m! Looks thoroughly intentional, you see! And the entire edition gone out, too!"

"My dear fellow, we'll have it 'errated' in to-morrow's earliest issue."

"And have all the more attention called to it? No, let it rest!" and Midsummer hurled himself out into the street with the honey of his philanthropy turned to gall for the moment, and a wild desire in his heart to forswear newspapers and take to Western wilds. Forgive him, for he was comparatively a young author. Besides, without any conceit, he knew his contributions were widely read; and he liked to give to the world the best of his brain, the warmest and truest of his heart. And here was this error breaking out of his well-meant and eloquent pathos, like a malicious, untimely horse laugh!

Next morning assistant-foreman Jackson was sent for. The error was quickly traced to Erma's door. Why could not it have been traced to the door of burly young Brown, who read the Market and Marine, and who would not have felt a dismissal in the least? Or, better still, why had it not occurred on the hands of Snobbs, the heavy editor, who read his own proofs because nobody else was worthy to read them? I will tell you why: because destiny had a hand in it.

When Jackson returned he bore with him a concise little note, which he laid on Erma's table with a bow that had in it the profundity of farewell. Erma seized upon it and read. Some calamities are only stunning at first. Their pain comes gradually. Erma placidly returned the note to its envelope and said "Ah!" to herself as she sometimes did when coming across striking news in the proof.

"With the close of the week we regret to say that your duties will be ended," concluded the note.

"I'll not work another moment under sentence, my dear sirs!" exclaimed Erma, bringing her small fist down on the table in italics. She then put a note of instant resignation into the dummy and took her hat. In fifteen minutes she was at home.

"Now, then, Erma Haywood," walking up to the mirror, "here you are on my hands again! I thought I was well rid of you. I've heard nothing about you for five whole months. And here you come—out of work—demanding food, shelter, raiment. O dear! it's a heavy task to take care of you? I wonder if you are worth while? I wonder if you are worth the salt I provide for you? You see, my dear," nodding to herself patronizingly, "work may come and work may go, but board goes on forever! What a humbug your life is, anyway—just keeping your nose above water! Earning ten dollars for the sake of spending nine dollars and ninety-nine cents. Stale, flat and unprofitable! Idiot, you had best go into the country and raise chickens and cauliflower. How about the mission? I'll tell you what your mission is," with a menacing finger, "it is to wear dark blue stockings and quilted petticoats and a shawl tied behind, and have a little cart and some little bunches of vegetables and go trundling about from door to door, supplying your simple wants in that way. That is all the mission that will ever come to you, you miserable failure!"

This indignant self-communion continued much in this vein until the bell summoned her to dinner. As if it were not enough to be dismissed from a situation, the dumplings were depressingly soggy, and the dessert a bland and insipid rice custard—which she hated. Mr. Midsummer, looking down to her from his favored region—he looked at her quite frequently now—noticed the lurking trouble in her face, and wished that he knew more of her, her past, her present, her work, her self in fact.

Erma, looking up to him, wished she were Mr. Midsummer, with a man's work to do, and two children to care for. Life would be something like, then.

In the afternoon she went to look about a little among newspaper and book publishers, with what success may be guessed from the fact that evening found her too disheartened for any tea-drinking, sitting gloomily under her shaded lamp, with a page of note-paper before her—a single word, "Wanted," written at the head, from which unfinished manuscript the pen had evidently faltered.

"Wanted—what?" mused Erma. "A place as governess? No, I've no faculty for teaching. Lady's companion? Ha! I want to see the fellow-woman whose whims I could put up with. Seamstress? I know no more about a sewing-machine than I do about a steam-engine. Second girl?" The idea of being second girl looked so feasible that she took time to consider it.

Then she got thinking of the many pleasant homes she had had peeps at during her afternoon walk; of the plants and birds in this window, and the easy-chair and work-basket in that; the tableaux of happy mothers and happy children parading themselves just for the sake of hurting the feelings of lonely Bohemians like herself; complacent men—never any of them quite as *distingué* as Mr. Midsummer—hurrying home with sometimes a dainty paper of fruit or a nosegay or a magazine—or all three—and being met in the hall by somebody; cheery teatables, sparkling with glass and silver, and failing to quite hide themselves behind airy muslin curtains; even a chance cat, sitting "at home" on a door-step, with a blue ribbon tied in a loving bow about her neck—all these hints of home-life Erma had gathered to herself with a sad consciousness of alienation, a sense of being defrauded of what was her own, her birthright. And now as she sat in her room alone and foot-weary, and just a little tired of caring for Erma Haywood, that curious, tender, sad, yet subtly consoling feeling of self-pity, which we are all, under real or fancied wrong, capable of, came over her, and she went deliberately to the narrow white couch, standing in the recess dignified as "bedroom," and flung herself down upon it in a passion of tears, such as she had not enjoyed for many a day. It was good for her. I am not an advocate of tears on ordinary occasions. They are too luxurious for every-day use. If poured forth on trivial vexations and disappointments, they soon degenerate into mere sniveling. Nobody hated a sniveler with more vigor than Erma did. She was not sniveling. Hers was a thunder-shower of grief, violent and gusty, not likely to last long, but sweeping things before it while it lasted.

Thus sobbing, with her face buried in the pillow, she did not hear some tiny knuckles rapping at the door. Nor the door when it opened and closed. Nor the light steps that hesitatingly crossed the floor and paused at her side. She heard nothing until a small, still voice, with a wondering tremor in it, said close to her ear:

"Missaywood——"

Erma turned her head a little savagely—it is seldom pleasant to be caught crying—but the vision of Nannie with wonder and pity in her round eyes, and a great bunch of pansies and moss-roses in her hand, was too touching a vision to be regarded savagely.

"I have brought these for you, if you please," thrusting them in Erma's face and preparing to retreat. A big, "grown-up" woman having a wild crying-spell was an alarming as well as pitiful spectacle.

Erma got up from the bed and tried to command her voice.

"Don't go—o, de—ar!" hastily drying her eyes. "You bring these to me?" with incredulous emphasis.

"Yes, it's my present for you;" then adding, confidentially, "Papa and I went away out to a big greenhouse purpose to get them, and papa bought them for me to give to you. And I've got two roses for my vase. Did you hurt you, Missaywood?" In Nannie's opinion, bumps and scratches were the only events in life worthy of tears.

Erma blushed at the frank disclosure, and smiled at the abrupt question.

"It is the sweetest present that ever was, and I thank you, dear!" kissing the child's cheek. "No, I haven't hurt myself. I don't feel well, that's all. Don't say anything about it! It is very silly to cry, don't you think so?"

"But sometimes you have to cry, you know," said Nannie. "I'm going to bed now. Good night, Missaywood," shutting her adieus into the door as she disappeared, in her abrupt child's way.

Erma put the flowers in water, and sat down by them, an occasional sob still catching at her throat, and a bright red spot burning on either cheek. But she felt suddenly and unaccountably cheerful—unaccountably, because there was no material cause for cheer.

As for the rich, velvety pansies and the sweet roses, were they not the child's gift? And why should she not be delighted with them? What if they were really Midsummer's gift? What then? It need not follow that she should take on prudish airs and decline them with stately thanks, or that she should accept them with a school-girl's simper, thinking that they meant something. Oh! no. It was merely a graceful return for her great kindness in having tied up Nannie's bumped head; for having given little Bernie a buzz-saw, with which he had lacerated every one of his blouses; for having taken them both, one fine Sunday, to a long ramble in the park, from which they had returned with blistered noses and weary legs. Such kindness merited moss-roses, of course. And here they were, and she would keep them, and feel "greatly obliged." Thus resolutely she put away all "nonsense" in regard to the offering.

"And now, instead of spending my time in ineffectual blubbering, I think I had best attack those stockings that have been leering at me from my work-basket for a week. Yes, we'll darn our stockings, Erma Haywood, with a heart for any fate!"

Erma had a growing habit of talking to herself—because of being so much alone, and because she was a woman and couldn't avoid talking.

So she sat valiantly darning, when there came another knock at the door. "A cup of wretched but well-meant tea, with Mrs. McAfferty's compliments, I suppose," thought Erma; then she said aloud, "Come!"

Mr. Midsummer stood on the threshold, abashed and undecided. Nannie—in obedience to Erma's injunction not to "tell"—had straightway given her father a vivid account of how she had found Missaywood "crying and crying as hard as she could cry," but conscientiously adding that he "musn't tell, 'cause Missaywood didn't want anybody to know it." He expected to find a woman in distress. But here was a woman sitting up very erect, with a stocking drawn over one hand and a darning-needle in the other, apparently far removed from distress, and regarding him with astonishment and dismay.

Then both spoke simultaneously. She said, "Come in, Mr. Midsummer," while she hastily put her darning into the background, and he faltered, "May I come in?"

The frank way is the best way. To make weak remarks about the weather was something Midsummer was incapable of. As he accepted Erma's proffered chair, he said:

"I beg pardon for blundering in here after this fashion, but Nannie says—Nannie tells me—— Mrs. Haywood, you have some trouble. I came to see if you would—if it is possible for me to be of any service to you."

Erma blushed scarlet. "Nannie has been telling you how she found me behaving like—an idiot!" she said fiercely, as one of those tenacious sobs caught her throat.

Midsummer looked hurt. Erma saw the look and gently added, "You are very kind, Mr. Midsummer."

"You should be kind enough not to make me appear like an idiot!" he answered bluntly, but mollified by her tone and the pathetic sob.

"My conduct—since it has been made public—needs explanation, I suppose," said Erma spitefully. "I will tell you. I don't think anything was the direct cause of my—my—acting in that imbecile way. A storm had been gathering in my sky all day—commencing with—a—rather unpleasant circumstance; and all the little clouds of my past and present came floating up and joining that unpleasant circumstance—and—when Nannie came with her beautiful gift for me, the storm had begun and was raging. It is all over now."

"I am greatly enlightened," said Midsummer grimly, coloring with humiliation. "You couldn't well have taken a more graceful way of telling me that—I—have—intruded upon you. Don't despise me! I meant well."

"Despise you, Mr. Midsummer! I'm ashamed to tell you! It's so weak—this crying over one's self! I suspect this is the indirect cause: Yesterday I was an affluent proof-reader in the *Times* office. To-day I am dismissed, and a beggar! Until I get work again. That is all. Tears mend the matter vastly, don't they? Carelessness was the ground. I was careless twice before, but this last time the mistake was too funny!" and Erma hastened to relate the particulars of her fatal negligence.

Midsummer's face, meanwhile, held a variety of expressions. As Erma concluded her little story with a laugh that tried its best to be merry, he asked quietly:

"What do you think of the article, aside from that atrocious blunder? Do you remember anything of it?"

"I have it in my scrap-book here, blunder and all. It is grandly good! The man who wrote it is fit to be adored! I hope God will bless him!"

Midsummer rose and stood before her, looking down upon her with sparkling eyes:

"Mrs. Haywood—child!—do you know I am that author! And I vowed yesterday that if it would only please fate to throw that *Times* proof-reader in my way, I would thrash him within an inch of his life!"

"Good heavens!" ejaculated Erma, rising to her feet like an embodied exclamation-point.

"Fate has flung that proof-reader in my way!" continued Midsummer menacingly, something like a smile beginning to pull at his golden moustache.

Erma turned abruptly away. She was in no mood to be laughed at—by the man she loved—and it was suddenly revealed to her that she loved this man.

"You who regard so kindly 'The Poor in our Large Cities,'" she began demurely, "you can surely bestow inexpensive forgiveness on one who—who—has—paid rather dearly for the annoyance she has caused you?"

"No; I would have your life—I would have your life—in my keeping—if you will give it to me!" in a broken voice.

"I have loved you ever since the day you held Nannie in your arms!" he continued.

The sob in her throat again; but it was such a happy one.

"She said I was worthy to be adored. I wish I were worthy to be loved—a little!"

Silence.

"Very tempting things I offer her, I confess: poverty, the care of children, work, the love of a poor old newspaper scribbler——"

Then Erma flashed around upon him, and held out her hands.

"I can't love you—a little!" two great, joyous tears shining in her eyes.

"My darling!"

This story points to but one fact, and that is, our limited knowledge of the Unforeseen.

How little Midsummer had dreamed that he should come to press, with the "kiss of eternity," the lips of the proof-reader for whose personal chastisement he had thirsted.

How very far had it been from Erma's expectations that her "mission" was so near at hand.

THE GREATEST OF ALL IS CHARITY.

O fine tongues, O lithe tongues, sharp-pointed to kill
The tenderest heart!
O dark words, O low words, shot swiftly, and still
With delicate art!
Whence comes ye? O woman, your guilty cheeks burn—
Against your own sisters the weapons ye turn.
Go ye to the feet of the Master and learn
That the greatest of all is Charity!

O warm faith, O firm faith, sublime canst thou be
In woman made strong!
O blind eyes, O closed eyes, refusing to see
A lover go wrong!
Believing the son, though he lies to your face;
Believing the husband through darkest disgrace;
Why can ye not rise to a still higher place
In the greatest of all, kind Charity?

O star hope, O far hope, how bright canst thou glow
In mother and wife!
O deaf ears, O closed ears, refusing to know
The wreck of a life!
Ye cheer fallen man with the very last breath;
Ye hope against hope to the gateway of death;
Why can ye not list to the message that saith,
Lo! the greatest of all is Charity!

Ye see not, ye dream not, the torturing grief
Of one at your side!
She suffers in silence, and finds no relief—
Her tears she must hide!
All wounded, all bleeding, the poor maiden heart,
Yet swift as the Indian's pitiless dart
Your keen words are sent to the tenderest part—
Though the greatest of all is Charity!

Ye see not, ye feel not, the trials that chill
A wife 'neath her load.
O'ertasked and o'erburdened, she struggles on still
'Neath duty's sharp goad.
Ye know not the length that her daily round makes;
Ye know not the cares that her feeble hand takes;
Ye add your hard words, and the straining heart breaks—
Though the greatest of all is Charity!

Ye know not, unruffled, the battle for life
A sister must wage;
Ye know not, untempted, in what deadly strife
Her heart must engage.
She reaches the brink, but the chasm appals;
She clings with faint clutch to the slippery walls,
But down come your doubts, like a blow, and she falls—
Though the greatest of all is Charity!

Ye heed not, proud hearts, the hopeless condition
Of one who is lost;
It may be in waves of tears and contrition
Her poor soul is tossed.
Your pitiless scorn keeps her back from your door,
Your pitiless hand keeps her down evermore,
Though the Saviour himself said, "Go sin no more"
For the greatest of all is Charity!

O woman, O woman, the earth's sweetest flower,
Creation's bright crown!
How can ye, how can ye, still cherish the power
That holds your souls down?
O fairest, for whom all your youthful hearts burn?
O dearest, for whom all our aged eyes yearn!
O ready for Paradise, could ye but learn
That the greatest of all is Charity!

DESMORO;

OR,

THE RED HAND.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "TWENTY STRAWS," "VOICES FROM THE LUMBER ROOM," THE "HUMMING-BIRD," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXV.

"Why, you have put out the light?" queried the gentleman, as he refastened the casement.

"My safety demanded the act—the light would have betrayed me!" Desmoro answered, in an undertone.

"Who are you, and wherefore are you being thus hunted, as you term it?"

"I am sorry that I cannot explain my position, that I cannot return you an honest answer to your straightforward question; but, be assured of this, I am not here to harm you, or to commit any deed of wrong or mischief. I am an outlaw, 'tis true, but unhappy circumstances have made me such—I am not a bushranger at the core."

"A bushranger!" echoed the gentleman.

"Hark! they are in the garden! We must not let our voices be heard."

"Give me your hand, and I will conduct you

into an upper apartment," the gentleman rejoined. "'Tis a fortunate thing that my servants have all retired to rest, that I am enabled to receive you in this entire secrecy. I am a soldier and a man of honor—not devoid of Christian charity, I trust—and I pledge you my word, be you whosoever you may, that I will befriend you to the very utmost of my power. Come, give me your hand!" he added, placing his own on Desmoro's shoulder.

"Heaven bless you, sir!" murmured the bushranger, impulsively seizing his companion's hand, and pressing his parched lips upon it, feeling truly grateful for the kindly words he had just heard.

The gentleman now led our hero up a flight of stairs, at the top of which, pushing open a door, a spacious chamber, lighted by a night-lamp, was revealed. Into this apartment they entered.

Desmoro had lost his hat, and his arm was no longer in a sling. He presented a wild appearance, and his features wore a deathly hue.

Desmoro did not much prize his life, but he dreaded that life being extinguished on a public scaffold, before the eyes of a gaping, ribald throng. Indeed, there were moments when he dreamed of a time when he might lead an amended existence, when the ways of honesty and peace might once more be opened to him.

But such dreams were of rare occurrence, for there was yet iron in Desmoro's heart.

"Are these men on your track constables?" inquired the gentleman.

"I do not know. I recognise in the voice of one of my pursuers that of an old enemy."

"You are young to talk of having old enemies?"

Desmoro shrugged his shoulders and sighed deeply.

"Are you an escaped convict?" further queried his companion, curiously peering into the outlaw's face as he spoke.

"Yes, I am!" came from between the white, clenched teeth.

The gentleman was silent. Painful memories had been awakened within his heart, and his soul was overcome with a terrible anguish.

While they were sitting thus silently, there came a loud knocking at the house door.

Desmoro started up, and drew forth a pistol. "My pursuers! Why come they here? Let me fly hence by the front entrance of the house! Why should I remain to pull trouble on your head? If you'll detain them for a few minutes I shall be able to secure my safety. I have an asylum not far off. Where am I now?" he added.

"On the Wooloomooloo Road, under the roof of Colonel Symure."

"Thanks! I shall forget neither your name nor your charity towards me! God bless you, sir!"

Meanwhile, the knocking continued. The Colonel took up the lamp, and carefully shading it with his hands, hurriedly conducted Desmoro down the stairs into the entrance-hall of the mansion.

The door was soon opened, and uttering another "God bless you, sir!" Desmoro bareheaded, rushed out into the night, along the road, in the direction of Casurina Villa.

Father and son had touched hands with each other for the first time, yet both were in utter ignorance of that fact.

Colonel Symure replaced the door-bolts as noiselessly as possible; and then repairing to the back portal communicating with the garden belonging to the house, he inquired who was there?

"Open! open!" cried a voice.

"To whom?" asked the Colonel.

"To Government!" was the brief reply.

Instantly the door was unclosed, and Colonel Symure was standing face to face, with two men, the foremost of whom was the rascal Pidgers.

"What is your business here?" demanded the gentleman.

"We beg pardon, sir, for thus disturbing you; but we have traced a notorious bushranger into your grounds, and we are come to ask you to furnish us with a lantern, in order that we may pursue our search thoroughly," said one of the two men.

"You are a constable?"

"Yes sir; I am doing only my duty."

"If you will enter the house, I will arouse one of the men-servants, who will furnish you with all you may require. But, in the meantime, your bird, should he really be here, may escape you?"

"No fear of that, sir. I've left two men on the watch; if he be in the garden he'll not be able to get out of it."

Colonel Symure led the way into one of the lower apartments, and then rang for his valet, who had long since retired to rest.

The Colonel was exceedingly bland to his visitors. He was desirous of detaining them as long as possible, in order to give the poor fugitive a chance of getting beyond their reach. Perhaps this was not exactly the proper thing for him to do, remembering who he was, and that he was being paid to serve his country and his Queen. But the Colonel was not thinking of his duty at this moment, charity and mercy towards a suffering fellow-creature alone occupied his generous mind. He felt assured that he had not been befriending any really wicked man, and with that assurance he was quite contented with what he had just done.

The servant-man came in answer to the bell, and after his master had briefly explained matters, he produced a lantern and two or three big sticks, and pronounced his readiness to assist in searching the garden for him who was supposed to be secreted in it.

At this the constable and the valet at once proceeded into the grounds, while Pidgers remained lingering on the doorstep by the side of the Colonel, who had followed the men thus far.

The Colonel was holding the night-lamp in his hand. Pidgers could see the gentleman's features plainly while the light was thus reflecting on them.

"Sir, sir!" said the man, in a hoarse, mysterious whisper. "I knows ye!"

"Eh?"

"Oh, I remember yo weel, though your hair is gone greysome, and yer aren't quite so bowld looking as yo was when last I seed you in Braymount."

"In Braymount?" repeated the Colonel, in great amazement.

"Yes; doan't yo recollect me?"

"No," replied the gentleman, looking at the speaker, and much perplexed.

"Lor! yo don't say so! Yo was a sojer officer at the time, an' I war the stage-door keeper of the Braymount Theatre. Now, sir?"

Colonel Symure's visage waxed of a leaden hue, and the lamp in his fingers shook visibly.

"Yo calls me to mind now, sir?"

"Yes, yes—perfectly!"

"Yo onct gived me a letter to deliver to a chap of the name of Desmoro Desmoro—a fellar as was afterwards tried for housebreakin' and mur——"

"Silence!" interrupted the listener, with a shudder, his hand upraised with a menacing gesture.

"Lor, sur, yo needn't be so grumpy with me! I means no ill. Only I thought as how yo'd maybe like to year on him ag'in. He was transported to this country, yer knows?"

Colonel Symure's head was bowed on his breast.

"Oh, I know lots about him; but as yo doan't want to year on him, I'se not trouble mysel to tell yer nout." And so saying, Pidgers moved a pace, as if to join his companions; but the Colonel's hand griped the man's shoulder, and dragged him back into the room they had just quitted.

"Now, what do you know of Desmoro Desmoro?" queried the gentleman, through his quivering lips.

"I tould yer afore that I knowed lots about him, an' so I does."

"That is not to the point."

"Bean't it, sur?" grinned the rascal, narrowly watching the face of his companion.

"You love money?" questioned the Colonel, after a pause.

"Try me, sur!" was the cunning rejoinder.

"There—there is a golden key with which to unlock your lips!" said Colonel Symure, putting a sovereign into the man's hand, and assuming a gay, careless manner for the purpose of concealing his true feelings.

Pidgers pocketed the gold coin, and ducked his head in acknowledgment of the gift.

"Now?" said Colonel Symure, unable to wholly subdue his eagerness to hear some tidings, good or bad, of his unfortunate son.

The man fastened his two crooked eyes on the gentleman's countenance, and slowly delivered his speech.

"Mayhap yer knowed Desmoro Desmoro's feyther? I hev heerd it said as how he never had none; but I aren't sich a fool as to believe in nonsense loike that. Now, ye yorsel might pass fur the chap's feyther. Yore eyes, now I looks into them, is uncommon like hisn."

Colonel Symure flushed scarlet at these words, and his brain grew hot and dizzy. He stammered, in considerable confusion, some unintelligible words, and then was silent.

"P'raps yo war a friend of his feyther—eh?"

"Yes, yes."

"Ah, I thought it was summit o' that soort as made yo so mighty keen about him always. My! won't yo open yore eyes when I tells yer all. My!" And Pidgers rubbed his hands together in fiendish glee, delaying the telling of his tale in order to torment his listener.

The Colonel showed his impatience now, and the other proceeded.

"You've heerd, I suppose, that he's turned a bushranger?"

"Great heaven! a bushranger?" exclaimed the Colonel.

"Ay, hev yer not heerd on Red Hand, as theer be a reward offered fur?"

"No; I have but just arrived in the colony."

"Weel, I hev seen him this very night."

"Desmoro!"

"Red Hand he be called—yes. It's him as we're after now. I seed him, and knowed him directly. Then I called out his name, an' the fellar took to his heels an' runned as fast as his two legs would carry him. But we're on his track; he's somewheer hereabouts, an' never fear but we shall catch him. Then shan't I hev my revenge on him foinely?"

Colonel Symure was standing as if rooted to the spot; he felt voiceless and stunned.

Had this man spoken the truth, and had he (the Colonel) really seen his son and befriended him?

Merciful powers! if he could only overtake that son, and, throwing his fatherly arms about him, gather him to his heart, how happy he should feel.

And had Desmoro become a desperate man—a man to be feared by every wayside traveller, by the owner of every lonely dwelling?

Colonel Symure shivered, and a deathly sickness pervaded his whole frame. Oh, if he had but known his story one short half hour ago, how differently he would have acted.

"Father in heaven, is it thus Thou punishest Thy erring children?" the stricken man whispered within himself. "Well, well, Thy will be done!"

"Arn't I told yo a most wonderful story, sir?" asked Pidgers. "In coorse, I comed here a emigrant. I didn't come out here at my country's expense. I'se a respectable member of society—a free man, as is bill-sticker to the Royal Victoria Theatre, Sydney, Noo South Wales, which same is my address whensoever you want me."

"Thank you—thank you!" returned the Colonel, in an abstracted manner.

The man now moved towards the door, as if about to take his leave.

"Good-bye, sir, an' thank yer very much," added Pidgers, scraping his foot. "Doan't trouble yorsel, I'll find my way out o' doors in less than no time."

And as he finished his sentence he was gone, and the Colonel was left in a state of misery far better imagined than described.

CHAPTER XXVI.

We will now follow the flying steps of poor Desmoro, as he sped through the darkness, along the Wooloomooloo Road. He was making his way in the direction of Casurina Villa, praising the gloom which was shrouding his flight, and praying to reach the security of the consul's house. He was blaming himself for the risks he had so foolishly incurred, and thanking heaven that he had escaped his pursuers. He deemed himself almost safe now; and he was resolving in his own mind to run no further risk at present, but to make his way back as soon as possible to his cavern-home.

At length Desmoro stood before the gate of Casurina Villa. He looked through the iron railings in front of the house, and, glancing at one of the upper casements, perceived a light burning in it.

There was something significant in this light, Desmoro thought. To him it was as welcome as is a flaming beacon to some bewildered, storm-tossed mariner.

The bushranger clapped his hands together. A safe proceeding on his part, and one that the watcher—supposing there were one—would not fail to understand.

He struck his palms together thrice, then the light from the casement vanished suddenly; and presently a soft footfall, crunching the gravelled garden pathway, fell upon his listening ear.

The footsteps grew nearer and nearer to the closed gate; then a voice, in accents low, demanded "who was there!"

"Red Hand," was the rejoinder.

"All right, thank heaven! I have been very anxious on your account," spoke Marguerite herself, as she unlocked the gate, and admitted our hero.

"I have been recognized and pursued," said he, in hurried accents, scarcely above his breath.

"Recognized! Pursued!" repeated she, in alarm; "oh, I feared as much! I had a presentiment of some evil falling upon you, and that was the reason why I did not retire at my usual hour to-night, and wherefore I placed a light in my chamber window.

"Heaven bless you, mademoiselle!" he exclaimed, following her conducting steps, which led him into the house, where Desmoro felt quite secure.

"Now tell me all about your late adventures," she said, admitting him into an apartment where one wax candle was burning all alone.

Desmoro was astonished at the request which had been made with much earnestness. He looked at his fair companion's face, and in it he fancied he saw an expression of deep interest in himself and his doings. He was only a man, and a woman of birth, education, beauty, and refinement, was before him, anxiously gazing into his eyes, and waiting for his coming words.

Desmoro felt as if suddenly lifted from this common earth to the realms above—to those realms where only the angels dwell in peace, and purity and love.

At this moment he felt his disgraceful position most keenly. Was he not an outlaw? As such, then, he had no right to be sitting in the presence of a lady such as Marguerite d'Auvergne. Nevertheless, as briefly as possible, he narrated to her all that had occurred to him since she had last seen him, and the difficulty he had experienced in escaping his pursuers, to all which particulars his listener gave a most attentive ear.

"Oh, Red Hand!" she cried, as he finished his recital. "Why do you not abandon this hazardous life, and strive to lead one worthy of yourself. You were surely born for something better than bushranging. I am only a woman—a single-handed woman; but, notwithstanding that fact, I could give you considerable assistance in many ways, and my father has some interest with Government. Let me entreat you to heed good counsel. It is not yet too late to make amends for the past; and, though the clouds of ill-fortune lower on you now, sunshine may still be in store for you."

Desmoro, who had hearkened to the lady's words with a drooping head and a saddened heart now raised his eyes to hers. He was grateful for the concern she was evincing respecting his future welfare, and he told her as much, simply and truly, in language from his heart. He said that he could not resign himself into the hands of the Government, that he must continue to pursue the road he had been compelled to mark out for himself, no matter whither the road might eventually lead to. Circumstances, not choice, had driven him into the bush, and made him a lawless, desperate man. And what he had been made, such he must remain for ever.

"It is all very dreadful," she answered. "But could you not effect an escape from the colony altogether?" she added with eagerness. "You would do so if you could, would you not?"

"Oh, mademoiselle, you forget that I am a marked man—that far and near people are familiarly acquainted with my personal defect—my birthmark—this stained palm of mine, which, from my earliest childhood up to the present time, has been a source of the keenest mortification and misfortune to me. Where can I go? Where can I hide myself from observation, bearing upon me such an indelible stamp as this?" And as he delivered these words, Desmoro held aloft his red hand, while his forehead and cheeks were suffused with a deep flush, and his whole frame quivered with suppressed emotion.

"How much I sympathize with you!" exclaimed Marguerite. "And so you deem that heaven has left your future hopeless—that your onward way in life is utterly dark? I cannot, will not believe it, Red Hand!"

He made her no reply. He felt entranced in her pure presence, and he was wishing that he could listen to her for ever.

Desmoro had a most reverential love for women—for women pure and good, be it understood. His nature was sensitive, tender and affectionate, and being such you may comprehend that he was not wholly insensible to the gentle and anxious solicitude shown him by the French consul's daughter.

The bushranger, notwithstanding that he was as handsome as Apollo, possessed no personal vanity. He had never once dreamed of admiring himself, nor dreamed he of awakening admiration in others.

Desmoro sought no pillow that night. Marguerite and he sat talking together until broad daylight.

"I must begone now, mademoiselle," he said, rising—"begone before your domestics are astir. My presence here at this early hour would look strange."

"And whither would you go, thus unrefreshed by either sleep or food?" Marguerite asked, starting up from her seat in visible trepidation. "Oh, heaven! give some thought to what you are about to do! Remember that that hideous man may still be on the watch for you; oh, be careful!"

And Desmoro felt a light hand laid on his coarse sleeve, and saw a pair of humid eyes gazing into his own.

He felt almost chained to the spot. Marguerite's beauty, which was of no common stamp, was exercising a powerful influence over him, an influence nearly irresistible. Nevertheless, he bade her adieu, and hastily quitted her. He was wishful to regain possession of his horse, which he had left at the hostel, and with that intention he hurried along, desirous of reaching the town before its inhabitants were stirring.

He went boldly to the stable-yard and demanded his steed, which was given up to him immediately, and without the slightest hesitation of any sort. "Here is a half-crown for your hat, my lad," said Desmoro, tossing a coin to one of the stable-boys, and at the same time snatching his head-covering. Then without waiting to refresh his inner man, Desmoro vaulted into his saddle, and started off in the direction of his home in the bush.

For upwards of ten miles Desmoro rode without any interruption presenting itself before him, and he was now growing more confident o his safety from pursuit. He had both his hands at full liberty, ready to defend himself in case he were suddenly attacked by any of the agents of the law. He had resolved to sell his life dearly, and he was fully prepared to do so.

It was strange, while thus surrounded by danger, that the bushranger could spare thoughts for his late hostess, the beautiful French woman. But strange or not, he was thinking of her every step of the road he rode, reviewing in imagination all her looks, and recalling every word she had uttered during their late interview. And the more he thought of her, the braver he felt, and the more precious his life seemed to become to him. How his lonely heart was longing to cling unto some human creature—unto some one purer and better than himself. Yet he could never hope to gain such a companion, for woman's love was not for the outlaw, not for the man who was being hunted like a wild beast.

Desmoro reached his cave-home in perfect safety, and was warmly welcomed by his guest and poor Neddy.

Monsieur d'Auvergne at once beset his host with numberless inquiries of one sort or the other; and Desmoro, now able to make light of the perils he had just escaped from, gave his companion a graphic and lively account of his recent adventures in Sydney.

The gentleman listened in silence, only sighing now and then, and gravely shaking his head; while Neddy looked admiringly at Desmoro, thinking how very clever and valiant he was.

The best stew of kangaroo that Neddy had ever concocted was soon laid before Desmoro's hungry eyes, and Neddy was well pleased to see his master so rapidly dispose of the savory morsels he had prepared with so much care and skill.

Desmoro's head was always cool, for the reason that he never drank any other beverage than that furnished him by the fresh, purling stream. Had matters been otherwise with him—had he loved strong drinks,—it is probable that his conscience might have been burdened with other and more serious crimes than those he had already perpetrated.

Assured of the well-being of his beloved

daughter—who was his only child, the sole companion of his widowed home,—the consul bore his enforced imprisonment with patience and good humor. Each succeeding day he liked his host better and better, and he actually felt sorry when the day of his return home was fixed upon.

"I shall miss you, monsieur, when you are gone!" Desmoro observed, as they were sitting together at breakfast on the morning of the consul's departure. "Ay, I shall sorely miss you!"

The consul drew forth his purse—a purse well-crammed with bank-paper,—and offered it to the bushranger.

"I have been most courteously entertained by you, Red Hand," he said, with some little embarrassment of manner. "You will not, I hope refuse to allow me to make a suitable compensation for——"

Desmoro's face flushed with pride and indignation.

"Monsieur!" he exclaimed, with knitted brows, "Red Hand is a bushranger, not the keeper of a tavern. I have deemed you my honored guest, and for the trifling hospitality I have showed you, I only crave a small place in your memory, an assurance on your part that I shall not be altogether forgotten by you!"

Desmoro had uttered these latter words with so much feeling, that, Neddy, who was kneeling before the rude and capacious fire-place, using his lungs in place of a pair of bellows, looked up in mute astonishment.

"Be assured, Red Hand, that I will be your stanch friend if ever you should stand in need of such," returned the gentleman. "Come or send to me at any hour, near or afar off, and I will attend to the summons."

"Is the mare saddled, Neddy?" asked Desmoro, turning to the man, who was still employed in coaxing the dying embers to look alive again.

"She's all right, mister—tethered to the fig-tree yonder," the man answered, nodding his head in an uncertain direction.

Desmoro now disappeared, and, after the lapse of ten minutes, returned with a bunch of bush flowers in his hands. Glistening with morning dew were these gems of the Australian wilds—these scarlet globes of the waratah—these soft golden-hued buds of the mimosa—these scented native roses—and these rich purple blossoms of the sweet tea-plant. You know his natural taste for artistically arranging bouquets. The present nosegay, although composed of a careless gathering, came gracefully out of the hands of Desmoro.

"Your kindness has emboldened me to solicit a favor. May I presume, monsieur, to send this to mademoiselle?" he asked, with considerable hesitation. "I may never see her or you again, monsieur," he added, presenting his simple flowers, which the gentleman smilingly received.

"I will take care that Marguerite receives them safely," he rejoined.

Then there was a shaking of hands under the shade of the tall fig-tree, which was leaning over, and resting its leafy head amid the branches of its nearest neighbor, and then the gentleman mounted the horse, which Desmoro at once begun to lead up the pass, the steepness of which was the safeguard of his cavern-retreat.

Upward, upward, winding along the craggy, precipitous cliff, the bushranger, and the horse and rider, slowly made their way. The poor consul, who was a very timid man, and far from being a decent horseman, clung to his saddle most tenaciously, never once daring to look backwards, and uttering exclamations of fear all the while.

At length they arrived at a place of safety, at a cleared spot on the flat top of a hill, whence they could see the surrounding country laid all before them.

"You will no longer require a guide now, monsieur," spoke Desmoro. "Keep yonder high tree in constant view until you arrive at the road; then turn to your left, and heaven guard you to the end of your journey."

"Thanks—thanks!" exclaimed the gentleman. "You have a most secure retreat here," he continued. "I should never be able to discover again either of the entrances to your home."

Desmoro laughed.

"You will never try to do so, I think."

"Nay, who knows!" he replied, as he waved his hand, touched his steed, and prepared to ride away.

"Take care lest you encounter the owner of the beast!" said Desmoro, as he moved from the spot. "Remember that I've made you a present of a stolen horse! Ha, ha!"

But the gentleman heard not Desmoro's parting words, he was already galloping onwards.

CHAPTER XXVII.

We left Colonel Symure plunged in amazement and distress at what he had just heard relative to his unhappy son—the convict Desmoro.

The Colonel paced his chamber for hours and hours, unable to keep still.

Merciful powers! he had clapsed hands with his own son, and had been in utter ignorance of that fact until this moment, when that son was beyond his reach—gone heaven alone knew where.

What was he to do now? His heart was yearning towards the poor outlaw—his arms aching to enclasp him.

He trembled when he reflected on the terrible dangers that encompassed Desmoro; that the scaffold was awaiting him should he ever be caught.

His face convulsed with the mental agony he was enduring, Colonel Symure fell on his knees, and prayed—prayed with a fervent spirit, and a contrite soul—prayed that heaven would watch over his unhappy son, and lead him out of further guilt and peril.

Colonel Symure would have flown out into the night and darkness, could he have hoped to overtake the poor fugitive whom he had so lately befriended; but the Colonel was in complete ignorance of the direction of that fugitive's flying steps, and consequently would be at a loss whither to direct his own.

The men had searched the grounds, but finding there nothing to repay their pains, they had at once departed, and were now pursuing a fresh route, the contrary one to that which our hero had taken.

But the Colonel was not aware of that fact; these agents of the law might be on the very heels of Desmoro for aught the gentleman knew to the contrary.

Had the Colonel been standing before the mouth of a loaded cannon, expecting to be blown to pieces, he could not possibly have endured more mental anguish than now was his.

He paced the floor until broad daylight streamed through the chamber windows. As he passed by one of the mirrors, the Colonel started to see the haggard face it reflected.

He was a lonely man in the world now, for his brother, Percy Symure, was long since dead, and the fiery-tempered Caroline still lived apart from him. The Colonel still clung to the army, and had gladly accompanied his regiment when it was ordered abroad. He knew that he was going to the country where his own and only son abided in degraded bondage, and he was nursing a hope that by some means or other he might be able to obtain the young man's pardon.

On reaching the colony, military duties had so occupied his attention and time, that, as yet, he had had no opportunity of making any inquiries whatever respecting Desmoro. He was a painfully sensitive man, and, being such, wished to pursue his search as secretly as possible. The event of this night had, however, given him information—terrible information, concerning the object of his constant and aching thoughts.

For several days, Colonel Symure, was to be seen hanging about the police-office. He was listening to the different cases, fearful that Desmoro might be caught, and brought up there for examination. He was looking wretchedly ill, and there was a restless, wild expression in his eyes, which betokened a mind sadly disturbed, and full of sore distress. Every morning he devored the contents of the different newspapers, and afterwards he would walk about the town, stopping to read every handbill on his way. Yet no tidings could he obtain of Desmoro.

Often the poor Colonel might be seen talking to constables, asking them questions concerning Red Hand, his looks all the while filled with nervous anxiety and trepidation. His brother officers thought their Colonel going demented, for little could he converse about now, save bushrangers and their doings.

The Colonel visited the theatre one evening, in the hope of seeing there the rascal Pidgers, thinking that that individual might be enabled to give him some information concerning the hapless Desmoro. But the gentleman failed to get a sight of the billsticker, and left the temple of the drama in much disappointment.

A few evenings subsequent to his visit to the theatre, being present at a dinner-party given by the French consul, Colonel Symure adroitly introduced the name of Red Hand; at the mention of whose name Mademoiselle d'Auvergne changed color and trembled, while her father puffed out his cheeks, and looked full of mysterious importance.

Marguerite, on whose left was seated the Colonel, was wishing that officer far away at the present moment. She was afraid of her father being led to recount his late adventure with the bushranger now in question. You see, the consul was a sad gossip, and his daughter was well aware of that fact.

Marguerite tried to turn the conversation into another channel; but she tried in vain, the subject she so dreaded was in full swing.

"Red Hand!" cried one of the company, a red-whiskered Irishman. "By St. Patrick, I know the fellow; may the furies fly away with the scoundrel, say I! Did any of ye hear how I was stopped and robbed by him?"

"Stopped and robbed by Red Hand!" echoed half a dozen voices, in full chorus. "What—you, Major O'Moore?"

"To be sure! Is it possible that ye've never heard of that adventure of mine?"

"Never—never, Major!"

"You'd like to hear it, I daresay?" added the officer, clearing his throat, and preparing to commence his narration.

"Oh, yes, yes, Major!"

At this moment, Marguerite's knife and fork dropped from her nerveless fingers. She dreaded to hear of any of Red Hand's wrongdoings, and would have given much could she have escaped from listening to the Major's forthcoming story.

To commence, thin, as I was journeying from Lascelles' Station—Lascelles, who was once in the army, is a friend of mine, whom I'd been visiting on this occasion, ye must understand. Well, as I was journeying along this road—which was as bad a one as I'd ever wish to see 'twixt this and anny place—longing to reach Sydney again—I was then about fifty miles on the other side of Parramatta, and intending to put up at the first inn I reached—I all at once heard the greatest row I iver heard in the whole course of my life. "Oho!" said I to myself, stopping my horse for a moment, and looking around me, "there's a big scrimmage going on somewhere!" And by-and-by, guided by the hooting and yelling, I arrived upon such a scene. It was an immense farmyard, filled with a crowd of men, whom one in their midst, mounted on a fine horse, with a pistol in his hands, was evidently commanding to do something or other.

"Bed ad!" said I to myself. "Here's some fun here, I'm thinking," and accordingly I drew up, and listened to what was going on before me. There was a large weatherboard and brick place, into which the men were being forced to enter, and to come back laden with all sorts of stores and provisions. I pretty soon comprehended the scene by what followed.

"Strip the stingy hound!" cried the man on horseback, whom, I'll give you my word, was one of the handsomest fellows I iver clapped my two eyes upon, and worthy to be a soldier anny day of the week. "Strip him, lads, of his stores! We'll teach him to dock the wages and rations of his honest workmen! Go on, it's Red Hand himself who is answerable for this deed!"

"Red Hand, the murderous bushranger!" exclaimed I within myself. "Pleasant company for Major O'Moore, I'm thinking. Sure, my best plan will be to put distance 'twixt ye and me."

And with this, I was just about to ride on again without taking a hap'orth of notice further, when oh! may I never live to taste Monsieur d'Auvergne's claret again, if a hand of iron hadn't clutched hold of my shoulder, and that big rascal, Red Hand, was close by my side.

"Come!" said he, pointing to the house in front of us; "I'll trouble you to alight, go in there, and help yourself to any article ye like."

"I!" replied I, in the biggest flurry I was iver in in the whole course of my life. "Thunder! do ye take me for a thafe? I'm Major O'Moore, of her Majesty's——"

"Oh, oh!" returned he, laughing fit to kill himself, and at the same time helping himself to my watch as gingerly as possible. "We'll take the liberty, Major, of relieving you of this bauble; and now your purse, if you please."

And this was happening in the broad face of day, and in the presence of about forty farm labourers, whom Red Hand had been ordering about as if they had been so many bundles of straw, forcing them to rob their master, just because that master had been reducing their wages and rations.

Well, I handed the scoundrel my purse; by Jove! I couldn't do anny other, for his pistol was placed at my ear. I was sorry to part with my watch, which had belonged to my dead and gone father; and I told him as much, never once thinking that he would pay any attention to my words.

"Go in there, Major," he answered, again pointing to the building.

"But——" said I.

"No words, but obey me, Major."

And, by all the saints, if I weren't bundled off my beast, then and there, and marched into a store, out of which I returned with a small chest of tea in my arms. I vow I didn't know how the article came in my possession, but I was hugging it close enough—that same blessed chest of tea.

I then regained the back of my animal. I was purple with rage and shame, and resolving to cast the chest into the very first gully I should come across, when the bushranger, in a most gentlemanly manner, once more addressed me.

"Major," said he, laughing as if it were all a good joke; "I believe ye said that this watch was once your father's property?"

I replied in the affirmative. Whereupon he actually handed me back the timepiece, which is here to speak for itself.

And as he finished speaking, the Major drew forth a handsome gold watch, and held it up to view.

Marguerite d'Auvergne was as white as any marble statue, and her lips were twitching painfully.

"There's much good in this man, it seems," quivered the Colonel, after two or three of the guests had made sundry observations on the Major's narrative.

"Well, I'll admit that there are bigger scoundrels in the world than Red Hand," rejoined the other officer, refreshing himself with a glass of wine after his somewhat long recital.

Marguerite glanced at her father, who she could perceive was fidgeting in his chair, all anxious to recount to his guests assembled his late adventure with Red Hand.

"He must not utter one word about him," cried she, within herself. "It would not be generous—it would not be just to do so."

Yet, how was she to prevent her father from speaking of his acquaintance with the notorious bushranger, with whom she had all unconsciously suffered herself to become so strangely interested? She must invent some plan whereby she might gain a moment's conversation with her parent. She did not like to create a scene, by pretending to be seized with a sudden fit of faintness. Marguerite hated all sorts of mean manœuvring, and disdained to act a false part for her own advantage alone. But on this occasion, she remembered, that it would be for one who united courage and charity with all his lawless doings, that she should dissemble for a short time.

It was one of the hottest evenings of the declining year. The large French windows, opening upon the beautifully-kept grounds, were stretched wide, in order to admit as much fresh air as possible. On Marguerite's plate there was a bunch of luscious grapes, rich muscatel, purple, and full of cool, refreshing juice.

Just at the moment when the consul's lips were unclosing to relate his story, a woman's piercing shriek rang through the dining-room; and Marguerite, looking pale as a spectre, fell back in her chair.

The master of the house suddenly closed his mouth, and started from his seat. The guests likewise rose from their seats, and all was amazement and confusion.

Monsieur d'Auvergne was by his daughter's side, beseeching her to tell him what was the matter with her.

"A centipede, papa, had hidden itself in that bunch of grapes," she gasped, pointing to the fruit on her plate; "and I am afraid that it has stung my hand. Do not let any of the ladies disturb themselves; but pray take me away for a few moments, until I assure myself whether or not there is any cause for alarm—pray do, papa, or I shall die with absolute fright!"

Puffing with heat and terror, the consul waved his hand to the company, and, muttering some unintelligible sentences, led his daughter out of the room into another—the consul's study—whither they were not likely to be followed by any one.

"Papa," said Marguerite, in a wholly altered tone,—"papa, I am not injured in the least; I have only used a little *ruse*——"

"A *ruse*!" echoed the bewildered parent.

"Yes; I saw that you were about to speak of Red Hand, and I wished to prevent your doing so."

"I do not comprehend you, Marguerite."

"Papa, you must not say one word about Red Hand, In many ways it would be unwise and unsafe to do so."

"Umph! Well, I daresay you are right, Marguerite!" agreed he. "I had not given the matter a serious thought when I was on the point of speaking; but now I perceive how unjust and cruel I should have been to have breathed one syllable concerning the man who acted so humanely and nobly towards me. Yet, observe I should not have forgotten my pledge—I should not have forfeited my honor—by betraying the whereabouts of his dwelling-place. No, no d'Auvergne knows how to keep his word, even when that word has been given to a bushranger."

"Then you will be silent, papa—you will not utter his name again to-night?" she cried, earnestly.

"Indeed, I should have said little against the poor fellow!"

"No matter; our silence can do him no injury."

"That's true."

"You dear, good papa!" exclaimed Marguerite, throwing her arms about his neck, and kissing him. "Now go you back to our company, and explain to them that I am not hurt at all—that I have only been foolishly alarmed."

The worthy consul hesitated, or rather paused, to collect his troubled thoughts. He was not a very wise little gentleman, I am sorry to say, nor was he quick at understanding what people meant; but his kindliness of heart covered all his little defects. He was a vain man, nevertheless, who highly prized his head of hair; but he would have given every inch of that hair rather than willingly injure any one. Marguerite knew all her father's weakness, and all his goodness as well, and she did not fear his ready and implicit observance of her wishes.

"Well, Marguerite," he said, "I must say that I should have made a most capital story of my late adventure—a far more romantic one than that related by our friend, Major O'Moore, who, between ourselves, quite spoiled the effect of his own narrative. Ah, he should have heard me rehearse such a tale! He has no descriptive talent whatever and failed entirely. I am so sorry that I cannot give them just a mere sketch—a bare outline of the affair—the tilting over of the carriage, for instance—my broken arm—the horse madly prancing on the verge of a black gully—the sudden and mysterious appearance of the handsome bushranger, armed to the teeth,—and so on, eh? I should extinguish the Major's story, regarding which I do not believe a single word. Those Irishmen can pull a long bow whenever they choose."

"To be sure, papa," agreed Marguerite. "I, like yourself, do not credit one syllable of the Major's relation."

Thus consoled, the Frenchman puffed his way back to the drawing-room, and, with a smiling face, assured all there that Mademoiselle d'Auvergne had needlessly alarmed herself and every one else.

And, by-and-by, Marguerite herself appeared in person; and, as tranquillity was once more restored to all, the lady of the mansion led the way to the drawing-room.

Marguerite said that she was exceedingly sorry that she had been so foolish as to alarm her friends; but that she would take care never again to allow silly nervousness to so far overcome her presence of mind.

While she was yet uttering her excuses, pretending to laugh at her own folloy, Colonel Symure, who had followed the ladies, approached her.

"Pray, pardon me mademoiselle," he said; "but a most strange and uncontrollable instinct draws me towards you. Will you allow me to converse with you for a short time?"

At this request, made with the utmost gravity, Marguerite opened her eyes a little wider than usual, and, bowing, allowed the gentleman, who was almost a stranger to her, to take his seat by her side.

(To be continued.)

THE FAVORITE

MONTREAL, SATURDAY, JULY 5, 1873.

"THE FAVORITE"

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ANOTHER NEW STORY.

We are pleased to be able to announce that we have made arrangements with the world renowned author

MISS M. E. BRADDON

or the production here, simultaneously with appearance in London, of her new serial y,

PUBLICANS AND SINNERS

which will be commenced in an early number, and be handsomely

ILLUSTRATED BY OUR ARTIST

Miss Braddon's reputation as an author is too well established to need any comment from us. Those of our readers who have had the pleasure of enjoying "Lady Audley's Secret," "To the Bitter End," "The Outcasts," or any of her other works will, no doubt, be glad of an opportunity to peruse her latest production as speedily as it is written.

NO DEATH PENALTY.

It is not, perhaps, very generally known that another State of the American Union has abolished the death penalty. In Wisconsin, as well as in Pennsylvania, the divine mandate, "Whoso sheddeth man's blood by man shall his blood be shed" is disregarded. The highest penalty the law allows is imprisonment for life. The vilest murderer, equally with him who is convicted of the crime upon which society looks with as much, if not more, horror than upon murder, pay alike the penalty of their offences in total seclusion for the rest of their days. The consequence is that the state prison contains within its walls many delinquents who had they lived under a harsher—we may say a more just, code, would have expiated their crime upon the scaffold. In all probability it before many years pass away the number of such criminals will be very largely increased. We all know how fearfully frequent murder became in New York when, owing to the corruptibility of judges and the culpable stupidity of the juries, capital punishment became virtually suspended. With the fear of the hangman's noose removed from before their eyes street rowdies and ruffians waxed rampant. Hangin was "played out," and a life or two more or less was of no account—to them. Soon a reaction set in. The people rose against the region of terror which existed. Incorruptible and honest men were entrusted with the duty of trying criminals convicted of capital offences, and the good result soon made itself felt. The roughs found out — some of them too late to save their necks—that hanging was not "played out." Peace returned to the city, the daily murder was no more heard of, for would-be murderers were awed by the swiftness and sureness of the law as administered under the new system. The experience of New York will doubtless prove to be the experience of the State of Wisconsin. So long as there is no adequate punishment in force for him who sheds the blood of his fellow so long will murder flourish. The community will live under a region of terror, until lawlessness breaks all bounds and forces law-abiding people to rise in their own defence.

ANOTHER CHOLERA YEAR.

It is becoming only too painfully evident that 1873 will prove a cholera year. From several quarters we hear of the appearance of this dreaded scourge—in Prussia, in the Southern States, and in New York. In the latter place it is accompanied by the small-pox. In Tennessee it is especially virulent, carrying off in some cities an average of twenty-five victims a day. From the South it appears to be spreading slowly but surely northwards and it may be upon us any day before we are ready to meet its approach. In the face of the warnings already given it behoves us to make every preparation to avert the attacks of this insidious enemy. In England the question of the prevention of cholera has recently attracted much attention, and has even been made the subject of an important report issued by the Lords of the Privy Council. In this report the writer, Dr. John Senior strongly urges that attention should be paid to diet. The dangers of diet, he says, appear to lie as follows :—"Firstly, in those mere excesses of diet which (especially under circumstances of fatigue) occasion sickness to the stomach, or an increase labor of digestion ; secondly, in taking food, solid or fluid, which is midway in some process of chemical transition—half fermented beer, and wine, water containing organic impurities, meat and game and venison no longer fresh and not completely cooked, fish and shellfish in any state but the most perfect freshness, fruit or vegetables long gathered or badly kept, and the like ; thirdly, in the excessive or unseasonable use of refrigerent drinks or ice ; fourthly, in partaking largely of those articles of diet which habitually, or by reason of imperfect cooking, pass unchanged through the intestinal canal ; and, fifthly, in the indiscreet use of purgative medicines, or in taking any article of diet which is likely to produce the same effect." These suggestions should receive all the attention they deserve during the hot season.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS.

All communications intended for this department should be addressed to J. A. Phillips, Editor FAVORITE.

A REGULAR SUBSCRIBER, Montreal.—We are afraid you have fallen into the hands of one of those contemptible creatures, a male flirt, who is simply amusing himself at the expense of your, and your friend's feelings. If his attentions should be of a very marked character refer the case to your nearest male relative.

J. H., Sherbrooke, writes us : "Would you kindly refer me to the original of the quotation (translation), 'Whom the Gods love, die young.' I have essayed our collegiate pundits here on the subject. Result—'Darkness and nothing more.'" The line occurs in one of the tragedies of Euripides ; in the original Greek it reads,

"Ous theoi philousin eos thesnontai."

JULIUS, Pembroke, writes us: "I love my cousin with a love that will not be suppressed, and she loves me also. Nothing has as yet been said between us as to matrimony, as I was waiting to ask your advice. The questions I would ask are :—1. Is the marriage of first cousins prohibited by law? 2. If not, and we were married, would our children be deformed, as some say?" 1. The marriage of first cousins is perfectly legal ; if one, or both of you, however, belong to the Catholic Church you must obtain a dispensation before marriage, as the union of first cousins is not permitted by the Church under ordinary circumstances. 2. There is no more probability of your children being deformed than if no blood relationship existed. It is generally held that the continuous intermarriage of blood relations for several generations tends to idiotcy, and, in some instances to the birth of deaf mutes ; but we do not think you need be at all afraid to marry your cousin, if you love her, as the probability of your children suffering is very remote.

MOONSTONE, Kingston, wants to know the origin of the phrase "The Man in the Moon." The origin of this expression is unknown, but the name of "Man in the Moon" has from time immemorial been applied to the dark lines and spots upon the surface of the moon, which are visible to the naked eye, and which, when viewed through a good telescope, are discovered to be the shadows of lunar mountains. It is one of the most popular and most ancient superstitions of the world that these lines and spots are the figure of a man leaning on a fork on which he carries a bundle of thorns or brushwood, for stealing which on a Sunday he was confined to the moon. The account given in Numbers xv. 22, *et seq.*, of a man who was stoned to death for gathering sticks on Sunday, is supposed by some to be the origin of this belief. Dante supposes Cain to have been the offender who was placed eternally in the moon for punishment of his crime. Some of the old poets thought these spots and lines represented the boy Endymion, "whose company the moon loved so well that she carried him constantly with her." Other ancients thought they represented a fox.

Several letters are unavoidably left over for answer next week.

PASSING EVENTS.

THE cabmen at Naples are on strike.

SEVERAL cases of cholera are reported at Dantzic.

SEVERAL cases of cholera have occurred in Treviso, Italy.

THE rumor that the Sultan is seriously ill is without foundation.

THE Shah of Persia is expected to arrive in Paris on the 5th of July.

THE Wimbledon team sailed from Quebec on Saturday by the *Prussian*.

IT is expected that the Pope will soon formally excommunicate the King of Italy.

THE *Great Eastern* has arrived at Hearts Content with the shore end of the cable.

THE Japanese Prince Alzuma has quitted the Annapolis naval school on account of ill-health.

GENERAL Sir Henry Rawlinson, President of the Royal Geographical Society, is seriously ill.

A HAVANA despatch says General Prellain prohibits the Republicans in Havana from holding meetings.

TWO vessels laden with arms for the Carlists in Spain have been detained at Plymouth by the Customs authorities.

THE woods on the upper Ottawa are on fire and the city of Ottawa has been almost completely enveloped in smoke.

A HALIFAX despatch announces the recovery of the body of Henry M. Wellington from the wreck of the steamer *Atlantic*.

THE Curé of Santa Cruz has ordered the prostitutes to leave Guipuseva on pain of death if they remain after a certain time.

MADRID was experiencing another Ministerial crisis, the Ministry which was formed but a few days since having already resigned.

HOLLAND is disposed to come to terms with the Sultan of Acheen, and it remains to be seen what that potentate will consent to do.

DISTURBANCES have broken out in Malaga, during which the Mayor of the city lost his life. At last accounts order had been restored.

THE Italian Ministry have tendered their resignation to the King, and will only remain in office until the formation of a new Cabinet

A WASHINGTON special says the official report of the Agricultural Bureau shows an average increase of cotton over last year of nearly 12 per cent.

A REVIEW of seven thousand troops was held by Queen Victoria at Windsor Park in honor of the Shah of Persia. The crowds of spectators were enormous.

THE Paris *Union* gives currency to a rumor that the Emperor William will remain incapacitated, and that the Crown Prince will be proclaimed Regent.

PRINCE NAPOLEON is reported as saying that he would cordially support a republic or any government France should adopt. He is unequivocally in favor of a free press.

THE treaty concluded between Turkey and the Khedive is one for mutual protection. Egypt will furnish 150,000 men in case of the invasion of the Sultan's dominions.

THE *Times* says if the Cortes will authorize the farming of the Philippine tobacco plantations sufficient could be realized to clear off the floating debt and pay the July coupons.

THE bill for the Canada loan guarantee passed its second reading in the Commons after a spirited discussion, in which Sir Charles Dilke attacked and Mr. Gladstone defended Canada.

THE Federal constitution for the Spanish Republic, now being drawn up, grants universal suffrage, and divides the country and its colonies into fifteen states, with Madrid as the capital.

THE King of Sweden has been interviewed, and has promised to send his son, the Crown Prince, on a visit to the United States as soon as his studies will permit—so say the New York papers.

THE Carlists are impressing able bodied men into their ranks, and seizing all arms they can find. Reinforcements are landing at Bayonne, and a general rising in their favor is anticipated in Biscay.

HON. ALEX. CAMPBELL will, in a few days, vacate the Post Office and assume the Ministry of the Interior. This newly created department will have the management of Dominion and inland lands.

THE municipality of Paris has reconsidered its vote refusing to appropriate money for the reception of the Shah, and adopted a resolution providing for a night fête and illumination in honor of his Majesty.

A PROCLAMATION appears in the *Official Gazette* fixing the 1st of July as the day upon which the first, second and third sections of the Act to give effect to the Treaty of Washington shall come into force.

SEVERAL Norwegians brought out to work at the Moisic iron mines abandoned their work, and taking possession of a small schooner returned to Point Levis, where eighteen of their number were arrested.

THE Brazilian Council of State has decided that Papal bulls must have the *placet* of the Government before they can be promulgated, and that sentences of excommunication are without civil effect in Brazil.

THE *Times* takes a discouraging view of the progress of reform in political and financial circles in New York city, and thinks the efforts to break up municipal rings are gradually becoming weaker and will soon cease altogether.

HON. MR. ARCHIBALD, lately Lieutenant-Governor of the North-West, has been made Equity Judge and Judge of the Supreme Court of Nova Scotia, *vice* Hon. Justice Johnston, appointed Lieutenant-Governor of that province.

A VERDICT of "not guilty" was rendered in the case of Victoria Woodhull, Fannie C. Claflin, and James H. Blood for sending obscene publications through the United States mails;—great rejoicings among their sympathisers in Court.

ADDITIONAL articles of the Canada Postal Treaty with the United States, providing for interchange of postal cards upon repayment of an additional cent postage, have been signed by the Dominion Government, and go into effect July 1st.

THERE is no truth in the story started by *l'Evénement* of a rupture between Sir John A. Macdonald and Mr. Langevin. The relations between these two gentlemen are, and always have been, of the most cordial and friendly character.

AT Jerome Park on Saturday, Mr. Bannantyne's "Stockwood" won the mile and a quarter handicap sweepstakes in 2 minutes and 12 seconds; seven started. "Duffy" won the steeplechase, beating "Lochiel," "Village Blacksmith," and others.

HON. T. N. GIBBS has been gazetted Secretary of State for the Provinces and a Privy Councillor, and Hon. Hugh McDonald, Q. C., of Nova Scotia, President of the Privy Council *vice* Hon. John O'Connor, appointed Minister of Inland Revenue.

A DESPATCH from Central Asia says the Khan of Khiva surrendered unconditionally to the Russian troops before the capital of Khanate, after General Kaufman had rejected twelve proposals for capitulation, which were made with treacherous intent.

THE Government of Paraguay refuses to enter upon any negotiations with General Mitras, the special envoy of the Argentine Republic, until the Argentine forces are withdrawn from Chaco. The revolutionary parties in Paraguay and Centre Reas, were growing stronger.

THE report that Gen. Nouvillas was captured by the Carlists appears to be incorrect. He suffered a defeat, however, on Sunday, in Navarre, but succeeded in withdrawing his command with heavy loss. His son, among others, was wounded in the action, and the Carlist leader was killed.

ARRANGEMENTS have been made for commencing a railway survey from the town of Annapolis to Yarmouth. Ten per cent of the stock subscribed for at the latter place is called for, and the votes as to assessing the township for $10,000, payable in twenty years, will be taken early in July.

FLORENCE CARR.

A STORY OF FACTORY LIFE.

CHAPTER XLIII.

SECOND LOVE.

Sidney Beltram must have been either insane or had delivered up his mind and reason to the passion which burnt like lava in his veins and consumed him, or he would surely have paid more heed to the story which Lieutenant Blackie had to narrate to John Gresham and himself.

True, he was not a willing listener, and he had been induced to come at John Gresham's earnest request, and through the fear of exciting suspicion by his refusal, rather than because he wished to learn anything of Florence Carr's history, or was in the least degree prepared to be influenced by it.

Owing partly to this, and, no doubt, partly also to the fact that his mind was in a perfect chaos of horror, fear, and tumultuous passion, the lieutenant's story made no impression on him—seemed, indeed, like water on a piece of oilskin, to pass over without in the least degree penetrating it.

He heard it all, made some mechanical observation which might have been irrelevant to the subject, for aught he knew, and did not breathe freely until he managed to rid himself not only of the society of the soldier, but also of his friend, Gresham.

Then, under a plea of urgent necessity, he hurried back to the rectory to make preparations for flight in any emergency.

The web, in which he was but as a simple fly, was unconsciously to himself closing around him.

I say unconsciously, but that is scarcely correct, for he felt it, though he could not tell how it was or whose hand was drawing and weaving the tiny threads.

Bob Brindley, it is true, had exercised a certain amount of power and influence over him since he had become acquainted with his forbidden and thus guilty passion; but he did not give the man credit either for the amount of cunning or utter unscrupulousness which he possessed.

Still the clouds were gathering round him.

His own guilty conscience told him so, and while there was security and safety, he determined to fly.

It was a busy day at the rectory, for more than a usual number of visitors called with various purposes and wants, mental and physical.

But the same answer was given to all.

He was in his study, and had given positive orders that he was not to be disturbed for anyone or by anyone.

Hence the mild curate, who adored Lady Helen Beltram as an unattainable star in the distance, was inundated with work and callers whom the rector had been too busy or too indolent to see or attend to.

Lady Helen Beltram sat at home this bright May day.

The day which had risen so brightly upon the man who but a few short months before had been pledged to herself, was not yet gone; the sun wanted another hour ere it would set, and his life, which, like the morning that rose upon it, had seemed so full of hope and promise, now hung doubtfully in the balance.

Sense and reason fled, while, like sand in an hour glass, life and vitality were slowly ebbing away.

Very lovely Lady Helen Beltram looks this eventful evening, as she sits thoughtfully by the low window, and looking upon the stream of water which runs through Rosendale Rectory grounds and garden, reminding her in its quiet, almost sluggish course, of her own dull, uneventful life.

If her ladyship is lovely, she is very sad this evening; an undefined presentiment of evil hangs over her.

Some women would have rejoiced at the downfall of those who had injured her.

But there was no rejoicing in her heart.

She was repeating the words of St. John when he says—

"Little children, keep yourselves from idols."

And she shivered to remember how she had disobeyed the injunction—how she had made unto herself an idol—how, through its innate unworthiness, it had crumbled into dust before her eyes, and she shivered even now with pain as the recollection of that bitter agony came over her.

A footstep sounded on the walk outside, a shadow came over the window, and the voice of John Gresham asked—

"May I come in?"

"Certainly," was the reply.

And she tried to dry her eyes and obliterate the sign of tears before he could come round by the door and enter the room.

The eyes of love and jealousy are alike keen and watchful, and John Gresham detected in a moment the signs of grief, and more than guessed the cause of it.

"Lady Helen, you are in trouble and pain; may I not share and try to relieve it?" he asked, approaching her, and tenderly and respectfully taking her hand and holding it in his own.

"You are very kind, and I am very foolish, but I am dull and sad, and Sidney is so strange, and—and——"

Then she added, suddenly, and with an evident effort—

"How is your brother, Mr. Gresham?"

John let her hand fall from his own.

"'DO I PRESUME IN DREAMING, IN HOPING YOU CAN LOVE ME?' ASKED JOHN GRESHAM."

He was right in his conjectures, he told himself.

Worthless as his brother was, she still loved him.

"The doctor reports that he is no better," was the cool, constrained reply. "Of course you are anxious about him."

For a moment Lady Helen made no reply, though the hot blood rushed to her cheek; then she said—

"I am grieved for any one in distress or suffering, Mr. Gresham, but beyond that my interest in your brother ended long ago; neither should I have expected you to taunt me with it."

There was a proud flash in her eye, which told John that he was treading on dangerous ground.

"Forgive me," he said, again taking her hand, "but if you knew what I have suffered, you would both pity and forgive."

Lady Helen made no reply; she even made a slight effort to withdraw her hand, but as it was firmly held, she relinquished it, though with downcast eyes, and a deepening blush on her lovely face.

"I have loved you," he went on in impassioned tones, "loved you from the first moment we met, and my brother—Heaven forgive me if I wrong him!—saw that I loved you, and as he has done from boyhood, stepped in and snatched the prize I coveted.

"Tell me, Helen, am I too late? Was your heart so given to him that you have no love left in it for me? Oh, tell me, and end or confirm the misery I have suffered, for I have lived upon the rack."

Still no answer, except that deep, sweet blush.

The downcast eyes refused to lift their white lids and meet his own, lest, perhaps, they might a tale unfold which the coy tongue still wished to keep hidden.

"Sometimes," he continued, gathering confidence from her silence, "I have dared to hope that you had recognised in me the being without whom your own nature will be imperfect. It is so with me. I have never had another love, I never shall have: if you send me from you, I shall live and die alone. You and I, Helen, were created to be one, perfect in each other, and we shall be so on earth or in Heaven; alone we are neither of us complete, together we are a complete whole, one circle, one angel, which death itself for a time only can sever."

No answer still, though he can see her bosom rise and fall with suppressed emotion.

"You do not answer me, Helen," he said, after a pause; "has my love for you blinded me? Do I presume in dreaming, in hoping you can love me?—is it only kindness of heart on your part and good nature that have induced you to listen to me? Tell me. For Heaven's sake, do not deceive yourself or me; much as I love you, I will wait for you in Heaven, sooner than you shall wed me unloved on earth. Tell me, Helen; am I to leave you?"

"No, no! I—I love you!"

My dear reader, don't you think it is time to draw a veil over this interesting scene?—interesting enough to the parties concerned in it.

You know well enough, doubtless from experience, that when a gentleman has declared his own passion, and asked a lady if she loves him, and she admits the soft impeachment, there is, almost without exception, a certain amount—well, of overflowing happiness, which is apt to vent itself in affectionate nothings, embraces, and kisses, in which a third person could have no possible interest, or else, being envious or very straight-laced, would consider foolish and even in questionable taste.

To such I would say, if you have not proposed or been proposed to, according to sex, just try the sensation if you can, and see how you like it, and tell me if you want a room full of people to witness the soft glances, hear the gentle whisper, and record exactly what you said, and which might not have been remarkably clever after all to a wondering and possibly admiring public.

As I should not like an *exposé* of the kind in my own case, I will be merciful and not inflict it upon others; consequently, we will, if you please, drop the lovers for an hour, and take them up again when it is to be hoped that a little of their gushing is over.

"I wonder if Sidney will see me before I go?" asked John Gresham, as he sat on a couch by the side of Lady Helen with his arm most suspiciously near her waist.

"I'm sure I don't know, John, dear," was the doubtful reply. "Indeed," she went on, in an hesitating tone, "I cannot imagine what has come over my brother during the last few months."

"In what way, my love?"

"I—I don't know. He seems so wild, and erratic, and uncertain of temper, and he shuts himself away from us so persistently, as though he hated the sight of a woman. I am really afraid he will either go mad or leave us all and become a Roman Catholic priest."

"I hope not, most sincerely; but what is he so particularly strange about, Helen? True, he has shunned me a great deal lately, though we are still good friends, but I have seen nothing so unusually strange about him."

"Indeed, he is so, John. He used to be as sweet and gentle as a child, while he kept a curb on his tongue and temper; now he is sharp, irritable, gets in a furious passion without any apparent cause, and then will shut himself up for hours, even days together, having his food taken to him in his own room, and refusing to see or speak with my aunt or me."

"Only an excess of morbidly religious feeling, my love."

But Lady Helen shook her head.

Little as she knew of her brother's temptation, struggle, and fall, she felt that the pure religious fervor which had previously characterised him had given place to something far less holy in its character.

She could not tell her lover this, however, could not express half of what she thought and feared, and as though to partially change the subject, she said—

"Do you remember the morning when we found the girl who is so mysteriously missing on the ground in the clough?"

"Yes, I was thinking of it only this morning, and wondering if that struggle had anything to do with the tragedy of last night."

"Perhaps it might have," said the girl, thoughtfully.

But intent on her own story, and without thinking of the consequences of what she was saying, she went on—

"Don't you remember, John, that I picked up a blue enamelled wrist stud, with the initials 'S. B.' surmounted by a coronet, marked on it."

"Yes, you said it was Sidney's."

"So I believed it was—believe so still, in fact—but he denied it, positively and angrily denied it. He said he had the pair of studs still; therefore it could not be his. But, John, he has not got them; he did not tell me the truth, for yesterday, when I was in Manchester, at the jeweller's where I had bought the studs for Sidney as a birthday present, they showed me a pair exactly like them, which they said my brother had ordered to replace the set he had lost."

"No doubt he thought you might be vexed at what might appear carelessness about the present you had given him."

"Nonsense, John. A few months ago, and I don't believe Sidney would have told a lie to save my life. Is it likely, therefore, that he would do it to save me a moment's vexation?"

"I don't know, Helen. It is strange, as you say; but don't mention the matter of the studs to anyone, promise me, not to anyone."

"I do promise, though I should like to know why, John."

"Can't you believe me, dearest, when I tell you that I have a reason for it, and that I will explain my motive in good time."

"Yes."

And then there was silence for a time.

Lady Helen's heart seemed too full of happiness to speak, and mingled with the feeling of blissful contentment in John Gresham's mind, was a vague, indistinct feeling of dread, of something, he knew not what—dared not ask himself what—for the very shadow of it seemed too fearfully terrible to be more than the offspring of a disordered fancy.

He strove to drive it away, but it would come back like a grim phantom to haunt him.

Those two studs—whence did they come?—to whom did they belong?

The one found near the scene of a struggle with a young and beautiful woman; the other steeped in the life blood of one who had been her companion, if not her guardian.

"I must sift this at once," he said, speaking his thoughts aloud. "There is no time to be lost. Helen, my love, where is your brother?"

"In his study, I believe, John. Are you going?"

"Not going away, but going to him. He is my friend and your brother. I must solve my doubts, and try to save him. What am I talking about? Don't take any notice of what I am saying. I am alarmed and bewildered. Excuse me for a few minutes while I go to Sidney."

And with a kiss he left her.

Left her in perplexity and doubt.

Yet the doubt was bliss and happiness in comparison to the dreadful confirmation which all too soon came upon her.

Five minutes after, John Gresham returned to the room where he had left Lady Helen.

"Sidney is gone out," he said. "I knocked several times at the door, and receiving no reply, opened it. The room was empty. I suppose he will return soon."

But Sidney Beltram did not return—did not come back that night or on the following day, and inquiry after him grew more and more pressing, until the suspicion, which until now had but smouldered, burst out into a perfect blaze.

CHAPTER XLIV.

A FAINT CLUE.

Weak, faint and footsore, kept up only by the most extreme effort, and haunted by a terror which was as wild and unreasoning as to others it would have appeared absurd, poor Moll Arkshaw pursued her way towards Manchester.

It might be going into the very lion's mouth, yet what must she do?

She must get to London.

She knew too little of the geography of the country to find out any other way of getting to London except by starting from Manchester to the metropolis by train.

Fortunately she had three or four pounds in her pocket, money given to her by Florence the very evening of their abduction, to pay certain expenses incurred by the expectant bride.

This Moll had still with her, and intending to repay it, if she ever had the chance, she had no hesitation whatever in using it.

The fear uppermost in her mind was that Bob Brindley might discover her escape from the mine, follow, and murder her.

Willie Bolton would thus remain in prison, his innocence never be established, and the wicked murderer would be successful and triumphant.

Any one possessing a cooler set of nerves, and better acquainted with the laws and the ways of the world, than poor, frightened, simple-hearted Moll, would have gone direct to the headquarters of the police, satisfied them of her identity, told her story, and have placed herself under their protection until her enemy was secure.

But the ordeal she had gone through, the terror which Brindley had succeeded in inspiring in her mind, which made her believe him to be far more powerful for evil than he really was, took from her any thought or hope of encountering him successfully, and made her desire only to hide herself until the murderer was in safe custody.

Consequently, more like an escaped criminal than a free subject, and one in a position to denounce her enemy, Moll entered Manchester, just as the bells from numerous factories pealed forth in the early morning air, calling the hands to their daily work.

She had on the large black tweed cloak in which she had been wrapped when taken down into the mine, and she had found a colored handkerchief in her pocket, which she had tied over her head.

Such a costume as this might do very well to go to work at a factory in, but would scarcely be the thing for her to wear in travelling to London.

It was a bonnet or a hat, some covering for the head she wanted; her cloak and the rest of her dress would do well enough. The question was how to get a hat at that early hour, before the shops were open.

The cheap train would, no doubt, start early, and she had not too much time or money to spare; consequently, unless chance favored her in buying a covering for her head, she would have to travel as she was.

She had nearly reached the railway station when a little girl, evidently late to work, turning a corner sharply, ran against her. In doing so the girl's hat, which had not been properly fastened, fell off.

"Eigh, lass, will thee sell thee hat?" asked Moll, eagerly.

The child looked at her and thought she was jesting, for the hat was an old and shabby one, of simple black straw, much worn, and with a band and bow of crape on it.

"Aw've lost my hat," added Moll, hastily, "and aw'm going on a journey; aw'll give thee three shillings for thine."

"An' wha'lt aw do?" asked the child, tempted by being offered six times the value of the article of attire.

"Thee may have my handkerchief into the bargain," was the reply.

"All reet."

The transfer was complete, and if the child was late at the factory, and fined for being so, she had at least the satisfaction of having been well paid for it.

It was the evening of the same day, that the girl was seen by her mother, who had been at Oldham all day, visiting a sick relative, wearing this handkerchief as she returned from work.

Her natural question as to what had become of her daughter's hat, resulted in the girl, who was not remarkable for speaking the truth, asserting that she had lost it.

Where did she get the handkerchief from, was the next question.

"Aw found it," was the reply.

Not believing the story, the mother took the handkerchief in her hand, and examined it closely.

Red and white, with nothing extraordinary about it, she was just going to put it down, when her eyes detected a name, written with marking ink and half washed out, in one of the corners of it.

With some difficulty she spelt out the name, "Moll Arkshaw."

"Moll—Moll Arkshaw," she repeated, the word and name sounding strangely familiar. "Where have aw heerd it? Ah! aw remembers, at Owdham. Where didst thee get this? Tell me the truth, or aw'll strap it out on yo'."

The threat of the strap was not an idle one, as the girl knew to her cost; but the very fear of it only made her persist more obstinately in her assertion.

Her mother could not, she mentally argued, find out how she became possessed of the handkerchief unless she herself told her.

Besides, if she told her parent of the three shillings she had been paid for her hat, the money would be instantly demanded of her, and, as she had already spent sixpence of it, she would not only be required to give up the remaining half-crown, but would get a good dose of the strap for her extravagance.

Being firmly convinced of this, she stuck to her story with so much persistence that her mother would have believed her had the case been less serious, and the matter would have been allowed to drop.

But Oldham, Manchester, and indeed the whole country, had been ringing that day, and indeed the previous one too—for news flies fast—with the terrible murder and abduction.

To-day large rewards had been offered by the government for the detection of the murderer or murderers, and a second reward offered by Mrs. Gresham for any trace of the missing women.

The cotton spinner's mother had suddenly been aroused by her son's ravings, and the suspicious glances and questions directed towards her, to the discomfort, not to say danger, of her position.

She had uttered so many meaningless threats against the girl whom her son seemed determined to marry, had vowed so insanely and persistently that he should not marry her, that she would oppose it at any and every cost, and now it was effectually prevented by the mysterious and violent disappearance of the intended bride.

People who had heard all these threats naturally suspected that she had kept her word, or at least been an accomplice, directly or indirectly, in the crime.

By her son John's advice, she offered a large reward for the discovery of the two girls, or any clue which should lead to their return to their home and friends.

Those who knew the old lady's violent temper and unscrupulous will were not blinded by this clever move.

But as there was no real evidence against her, they had to be content with wagging their heads knowingly, asserting they were not such fools as some people thought them, and still persistently clung to their opinion.

The two rewards, however, excited the cupidity of many persons who would have sold their nearest and dearest—nay, even themselves—for gold, and to this number Betty Jones, the mother of the girl who had sold her hat to Moll, belonged.

All day the thought had been running in her head, if she could but find the missing girls, or discover some trace of them, what a prize in gold she might become possessed of.

Two hundred pounds to any one who should find and restore the two girls; fifty pounds to any one giving information or a clue which should lead to the discovery of either of them.

Mrs. Jones had a clue—she was sure she had.

Fifty pounds for this handkerchief; just imagine it!

The very thought made her feel giddy, and once more she tried to elicit something more like a reasonable and believable story from her daughter.

In vain.

There are some children who are uncommonly like costermongers' donkeys—the more you beat them the more obstinate they become.

A little judicious kindness might have made them tractable to begin with; but unfortunately kindness is not tried until harshness has failed, and then it is too late.

The animal and child alike don't believe in it.

They expect treachery, for their confidence is gone, or look upon the experiment of kindness as a sign of weakness, and harshness again succeeding only appears to justify them in their belief.

Hence Betty Jones having beaten her daughter Sally with a strap until the child quivered under the cruel treatment, and her own brawny arms ached, threatened to send the girl to prison, and started off with the avowed intention of fetching a policeman.

Sally had no dread of the policeman.

Indeed, she had been beaten to that state of savage desperation which scarcely admits of the sensation of fear.

But she was determined that her mother should not have the treasure in her pocket; thus, sore and in pain as she was, she crawled to the little strip of ground at the back of the cottage in which they lived, dug a small hole in the soft earth, deposited her three silver coins, two shillings and a sixpence, in it, and having thus buried her hoard, the doggedly sullen little creature crawled back to the room and lay down before the fire in the same position in which her mother had left her.

Not that she expected her worthy parent back soon, for it was not the first time that she had been left alone with similar threats, never to be fulfilled, and often forgotten before her return.

It was, therefore, with more surprise than fright that she heard a heavy, tramping step accompany and pause with her mother at the door, and then, looking up, she saw a veritable policeman enter the room.

A child less accustomed to hardship and severity would have been frightened into telling how she became possessed of the large cotton handkerchief, or any one more used to kindness would have been coaxed in the same course by her mother's new attempt at kindness.

But Sally was past all this. She had been thrashed until all the finer and most nervous and susceptible feelings of her nature had been blunted and warped, and the feeling most predominant in her mind at the present moment was sulky defiance and a thirst for revenge.

It was, therefore, an unfortunate circumstance for Mrs. Jones that she promised her refractory child a bright silk dress if she would only tell all she knew, and enable her mother to gain the promised reward.

Sally, however, was not to be duped.

She had been promised too many things even during her short lifetime, promises never kept and never intended to be, and she was not to be tricked into obliging her mother in this way now.

"Come, young 'un," said the policeman roughly, though not unkindly, "you'd best make a clean breast on't; aw'll only have to lock thee up if thee doan't."

"Aw canna tell thee what aw doan't knaw mysen," was the defiant reply.

"Well, come along wi' yo'."

"Aw will na go; aw bean't a thief."

"Yo'll walk, or aw mon carry yo'."

"Aw will na."

Whereupon, without more ado, the tall, strong man picked up the girl in his arms and despite her screams and struggles, carried her off to the police station, accompanied by her mother.

Here, however, they were not more successful.

Threats and bribes alike failed to get any other account of the handkerchief from the girl, except that she had found it just after she had lost her hat.

The consequence of all this was, that with her mother's consent, the refractory witness was detained in charge all night, and though her room and bed were far superior to those to which she had been accustomed, her consciousness that she was a prisoner drove sleep from her eyelids.

Her anger and resentment had worn off by the next morning, however, and after a small amount of persuasion from the wife of the superintendent of police she told the circumstance of her meeting with Moll, and the exchange of head-gear.

After numerous questions, a full description of the pretty mill girl, even to the coal dust that was upon her, was obtained, and no doubt as to identity left on the minds of those in pursuit of her.

The matter was becoming still more complicated, however, at every step.

If Moll and her companion Florence had been carried away by violence, how did it happen that one of the girls was in the street, free and alone, and yet shunning recognition and hastening away from the very place which, if only injured and innocent, she would have been expected to come to?

Conjecture was useless. There was nothing to be done but follow and capture her.

Things easily said, but difficult of accomplishment, for already Moll had thirty-six hours' start of them, and they could not even vaguely guess whither she had gone.

That Sally had an extra cut with the strap from her mother for holding out so long, and then imparting her information to the policeman's wife, might be expected; but Sally had her revenge, for no portion of the reward ever fell into her mother's greedy clutches.

CHAPTER XLV.

THE OLD LOVE AND THE NEW.

"So you are really going to marry that old man, Mary?"

The questioner was Edward Leinster, the artist, and a grieved, almost contemptuous expression rested on his fair, handsome face.

"He is not old," was the evasive reply.

"He is old for you, much too old," was the next observation.

"I am the best judge of that," was the petulant rejoinder.

"True," he said sadly, "then it is settled?"

For the first time, the girl raised her eyes.

She was trying to be defiant, trying to brave out her own wilful, foolish act, but the expression of tender manly reproach which beamed upon her from the bright blue eyes into which she looked, was too much for the shallow mist of pride and pique with which she had surrounded herself. Resentment, fortitude, all gave way; and not knowing what else to do, she took refuge in a woman's usual resource, a flood of tears.

Some women may look interesting when sobbing and crying; the number to whom tears are an improvement, however, is so small that the experiment is somewhat perilous.

Indeed, it was the recollection of what a fright a fit of crying made her, that induced pretty Mary Garston to refrain from indulging long in the dangerous luxury.

"Then you do love me, Mary?"

Why would the man always repeat that objectionable form of love-making.

I am sure I don't know, and I don't think he could exactly have answered the question himself.

Mary at least did not like it.

He had said once that he thought she loved him, and the observation had not only irritated her, but confirmed her in the determination to deny and hide the feeling.

Mr. Ashleigh, however, had been a trifle too much for Mary of late.

He was heavy, prosy, dull, and it must be admitted, according to the young girl's ideas, disagreeably spoony.

Mary could have forgiven anything but this.

Had it been possible for her to love him, the case might have been different, but the prospect of becoming an old man's darling was not at the present moment alluring.

The period for the wedding was approaching, and it must be admitted she had spent the last few weeks wondering how she could escape from the fetters with which she had bound herself, instead of in pleasant anticipation of the happiness in store for her.

So Mary burst into tears, and of course Edwin thought it his duty to console her, which naturally made her grief flow out afresh.

(To be continued.)

THE PRINTER-FIEND.

BY P. D.

The night was dark, and not a star
  Peep'd through the gathering gloom;
And silence brooded o'er the type
  In the composing room.

The printers had to supper gone,
  And vacant were their places,
When through the door a villain crept,
  And stole Bill Norman's spaces!

Oh, foulest wrong beneath the sun!
  Oh, deepest of disgraces!
The darkest crime that can be done
  Is that of stealing spaces!

Bill went to "lunch," and left his case
  Filled—running o'er—with letter,
And thought he would return again
  When copy should get fatter.

When he came back he took his place
  Again before his cases—
You should have seen his attitude
  When he beheld his spaces!

It was no time for charity,
  Or other Christian graces;
He wildly cried—"I'll dot the eyes
  Of him who stole my spaces!"

The Fiend still lives and walks the earth,
  And so must walk for ever!
He cannot die—a wretch like him—
  For rest awaits him never!

And printers for long years to come
  Will tremble at their cases,
Well knowing that his spirit still
  Is fond of stealing spaces!

EDUCATING A WIFE.

A CHAPTER OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY.

BY ROBERT DALE OWEN.

Concluded.

Thus reassured, I suggested that it might be weeks before my father returned, and that it would be best to send him a letter, carefully prepared, at once. A copy of this letter, covering sixteen pages of note-paper and dated March 3, 1823, lies before me. It was in my sister's handwriting and signed by her, though in truth a joint production. I had put my heart into it; and for that matter, so had Anne, who made some excellent points. Here is one:—

"Do not imagine, my dear papa, that I intend to make a fine lady of this little girl; nothing is further from my thoughts. I wish to render her independent, and able by and by to take care of herself. With such an education as I propose to give her, she will, when she grows up, be a valuable instructress of youth; and how rarely do we meet with such a one! It shall be my study to prevent her acquiring idle or expensive habits, and to make my little charge much more diligent and orderly than you have ever seen us."

Then followed a diplomatic suggestion, intended, I am afraid, to put my father off the true scent. She told him:—

"In case I kept house for one of my brothers, she would, I am sure, prove a most agreeable companion for me; and, by affording me a never-failing source of amusement and interest, might enliven many hours I should otherwise spend in solitude."

The sly gypsy knew well enough that her elder brother, at least, was not likely to set up bachelor's hall and there to need a sister to preside; and that her pupil, instead of proving an amusement to her in the fraternal mansion, would probably there become a domestic blessing to somebody else. But of course it would never have done prematurely to suggest such a contingency as that.

Anne waited with an anxiety only less profound than my own for a reply. It was kind and favorable; and, my mother acquiescing, Jessie became a member of our family circle.

I was exultant; yet I put a still stricter guard than before on all I said and did when Jessie was present. It was a great exercise of self-control. No matter how numerous and brilliant the company in our drawing-room, I knew, by instinct, whether Jessie was there, and missed her at once if she withdrew. Young girls of my own age, beautiful, cultivated, and well-born,—and many such were, from time to time, inmates of Braxfield House,—all failed to awaken in me an emotion comparable to the feeling which the sight of that child, scarcely eleven years old when she came to us, uniformly called forth.

She seemed to win my parents' hearts, and they behaved admirably, making no distinction

between her and their own children; and for this I was the more grateful, because it placed them, now and then, in an awkward position. They would have to listen, for example, while some casual visitor descanted in warm terms on the singular beauty of their youngest daughter; and I overheard one preposterous flatterer tell my father how much she was like him: about as like, I longed to tell him, as I to Hercules. My father took it very quietly, smiling, and saying only, "She is not mine,—an adopted child." But I think my mother didn't quite like it.

I came very near betraying myself one evening; but fortune stood my friend. We had a young folks party, and a number of both sexes had gathered together. A proposal was made that we should "draw for sweethearts,"—for the evening, of course; but some one added jestingly, "Perhaps for life,—who knows?" So we wrote the name of each young lady (Jessie included) on a slip of paper, then folded these and shook them up in a hat which I handed round. It so happened that the number of young ladies exceeded by four or five that of the young gentlemen; so that, when all had drawn and my turn came last, there were still several slips remaining. I glanced at that which I drew and saw Jessie's name. In a moment, what Anne had said of my tell-tale face flashed across me; I turned instantly to hide my confusion by depositing the hat; and, as I did so, I dropped into it the name that was hidden away in my heart, and stealthily abstracted another unperceived. This time it was the plainest girl in the room; to whom, grateful for danger past, I cordially offered myself as partner.

But before the evening was over, I contrived to get possession of the slip with Jessie's name. This I secreted within the lining of a small bead purse which one of my sisters had worked for me. That purse and its enclosure exist still. I kept it hidden away in the secret drawer of a writing-desk.

Our experiment proceeded, smoothly and successfully, for more than two years,—two of the brightest years of my life; even though I had no means of judging whether Jessie's heart, in after-years, would turn to me or not.

I have heard the question debated, which is the greater happiness,—to love or to be loved. Theoretically, on purely ethical principles, one is led to the conclusion that to love is the higher privilege! and practically the experience of a lifetime confirms to me that view of the case. To love is best. It wears better, it has a nobler influence on a cultivated heart, than the mere consciousness of being loved, however grateful that consciousness may be to self-love, however, too, it may minister to vanity. The tendency of loving, if one loves truly, is to eliminate selfishness; but it often fosters selfishness to be the object of love. It is better to love without requital, than to be loved unless one can render double in return. It is not of love received, but of love given, that Paul, faithfully translated, speaks, in memorable words: Love, greater than faith, greater than hope, suffereth long, envieth not, seeketh not her own, endureth all things, never faileth. But the recipient even of the purest love may be dead to long-suffering, may nourish envy, may cherish self-seeking, may lack patience under adversity, and may fail when the hour of trial comes. Not he on whom love is bestowed is the favored one, but he by whom love is conferred. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

I never swerved in my loyalty to Jessie; yet, though I could not help being uniformly kind to her and watchful for her welfare, I tried hard never to give the child any reason to believe that I loved her otherwise than as I did my three sisters. They, on their part, treated her at all times with sisterly affection, as one of themselves; and this was greatly to their credit; for Jessie not only quite outshone them in beauty, but in musical talent, in grace in the ball-room and elsewhere, and ultimately in ease of manner. If, at the end of two years, a stranger had been asked to say which of the four girls had been raised from an humble home to her present position, I think Jessie was the last he would have been likely to select.

If I had remained at Braxfield, this novel experiment of mine could have had, I incline to believe, but one issue. It was otherwise ordered, however. In the winter of 1824-25, my father purchased a village and a large tract of land in Indiana, with what result I shall state by and by; and in the autumn of 1825, when Jessie was little more than thirteen years old, I emigrated to this country. I was sorely tempted, before I left home, to tell the girl how much I loved her, and that I hoped some day, if she should ever come to love and accept me as a husband, to make her my wife. But, while I was romantic enough in those days and later to do many foolish things, common-sense suggested that to a child such a declaration was ill-judged and out of place. So I departed and made no sign. With Anne, however, I conferred in secret; and she promised me, if I could not return in three or four years, to come to the United States herself and bring Jessie with her.

Though it is anticipating dates, I may as well here state the ultimate issue of this episode in my life. Two years later, namely, in the summer of 1827, longing to see Jessie once more, I joined an English friend and recrossed the Atlantic. I found the young girl beautiful and interesting even beyond my remembrance or expectation; and, what moved me still more, she received me so cordially and with such evident emotion, that—though I think I may say that I have never been guilty of the presumption of imagining myself loved when I was not—it did seem to me the chances were fair that, if I remained some months and spoke out, she would not say me nay.

But I determined first to make a confidante of my mother, in whose good sense and deep affection for me I placed implicit trust.

"My son," she said, "I saw, before you went to America, that you loved this girl and had already thought of her as a wife. But there is much to be taken into account in such a matter."

"You would prefer to have a daughter-in-law from our own rank in life?"

"If I could have chosen, yes; but I do not think that a sufficient objection. My own good father worked his way up from a position as humble; and Jessie's appearance and manners are as lady-like as if she had been my own child."

"But you have objections, dear mother. Do not withhold them from me, I entreat you."

"At least I should like to see what will be the result, on her character, of the next three years. I know you, Robert; you have a very high ideal of what a wife ought to be; unreasonably high, I am afraid. You think this girl perfect, but she is not. I should like to be sure that she will grow up free from undue love of admiration, and, what is more important, perfectly sincere."

"Not truthful, mother?"

"I do not say that; though, when she first came to us, I sometimes thought it. She is very anxious to please, and occasionally says things rather because she thinks they will be agreeable than because they square with her convictions. I should like a more earnest and downright character in your wife."

"You wish me to give her up?"

"No; she has many excellent qualities; she has so affectionate a heart, and such winning ways, that there is not one of us who can help loving her. But I have something to ask of you, for your sake, dear Robert, not for mine. This girl is only fifteen, a child still; and you have to return with your father very soon to America. Do not commit yourself: you ought not to marry any one younger than eighteen or nineteen. Let three years pass. I'll take as much pains with Jessie, meanwhile, as if she were already my daughter; and I will report to you faithfully the result, Come back when the three years are passed; and, if I am then alive and you still wish to marry her, I will not say a word, except to wish you both all the happiness this world can afford." The tears rose to her eyes as she added, in a lower tone, "I only ask for delay; it may be the last request I shall ever make of you."

I have never made up my mind, since, whether I did right or wrong. But my mother was in very feeble health at the time, and I felt no assurance that I should ever see her again, as, indeed, I never did. If she had objected to Jessie because of her lowly birth, if she had spoken harshly of her, if she had told me she would never consent to receive her as a daughter-in-law, I should have sought to engage the girl, young as she was, then and there. But all she said was so reasonable, and the unfitness of marriage before three years so apparent, that I hesitated as she went on. Her tears, at the last, decided the matter. I gave her the promise she wished.

My word thus pledged, I felt that I must hasten my departure for London, whence we were to embark. The day before I set out, I asked Jessie if she would not like to visit her parents in the village; and when she assented, I proposed that we should take a circuitous route through the Braxfield woods, the last time, as it proved, that I ever saw them.

On no occasion in my life have I suffered from a struggle between duty and inclination as I did during that walk. As we passed, deep in the woods, a rural seat whence, through the foliage, glittered, in the autumn sun, the rippling waters of the Clyde, I proposed to Jessie that we should sit awhile, to rest and talk. What we said and how long we remained there I cannot tell. All I remember is, feeling at last that, if we sat there half an hour longer, I should break the solemn promise I had made to my mother. So we rose, went on, half in silence, to the village, where we separated,—and dream and temptation were over!

Ere the three years of probation had passed, Anne had died,* and Jessie had married a most amiable and estimable young man, in easy circumstances,—had married before I knew, even, that she had been sought in marriage. More than thirty years passed after that walk through the wooded braes of Braxfield before I saw Jessie again.

It was in Scotland we met, both married persons. I found her in her own handsome house, in a beautiful situation, surrounded by every comfort and some luxuries. So far as I could learn, she had so borne herself through life as to secure esteem and love from a cultivated circle of acquaintances.

Just at first I could scarcely recognize, in the comely matron, the Jessie of my youth, until she smiled. But we met twice or thrice, and talked over the olden time, very quietly at first. During my last visit I asked her if she had ever known that I loved her and that I had wished to make her my wife. She said it had several times occurred to her as possible, even before I left Braxfield the first time, for America; that she had felt sure of it during the woodland walk, and especially while we sat together in that secluded spot, with the birds only for witnesses; but when I had departed to another hemisphere with no promise of return, and without declaring myself, she had felt sure it was because of her humble parentage, and so had given up all idea that she could ever be my wife. Then, with a frankness which even as a child she had always shown toward me, she added that she never could tell when she first loved me; and that if, during that last walk, I had asked her to become my betrothed, she would have said yes with her whole heart and soul. The tears stood in her eyes as she made this avowal; and she followed it up by saying, "I wished to meet you once, and to tell you this. But I know you will feel it to be best that we should not see each other, nor write to each other, any more."

I told her she was wise and good, and that I would strictly conform to her wishes; thinking it best so, for both our sakes. So even an occasional exchange of letters which, throughout our thirty years' severance, had been kept up at long intervals, has ceased from that day. And now, when more than another decade has passed, I am uncertain whether Jessie is still in this land of the living, or has gone before to another, where many dear friends who have been lifelong apart will find no cause for further separation.

Here let me confess that it needed, as prompting motive to overcome the natural reluctance one feels to confide to the public such details of inner life as one has seldom given even to intimate friends, a sense of the duty which an autobiographer owes to his readers. They are entitled, in the way of incident, to whatever of interest or value is strictly his own to relate; the secrets of others, however, not being included in that category.

When my father returned from Ireland, to find Jessie a member of his family, he related to us an anecdote which pleased me much, in the state of mind I then was, and which may be acceptable to others.

In the winter of 1818-19 a party of bright and lively young people had assembled, to spend the period of Christmas festivity at a spacious old country-seat not very far from Dublin. Several of them, ladies as well as gentlemen, had already acted creditably on the amateur stage; so they fitted out a large hall as theatre, and got up several standard comedies in a manner that elicited hearty applause. Encouraged by this success, they thought they might manage one of Shakespeare's tragedies; and their choice fell on Romeo and Juliet. They succeeded in casting all the characters except one, that of Juliet herself. It was offered to several young ladies in succession; but they all persistently refused, fearing to attempt so arduous a part. In this dilemma some one suggested an expedient. Miss O'Neill, then in the zenith of her fame, was an actress of unblemished reputation, most ladylike demeanor, and eminent talent, whom I once saw as Juliet. She was then regarded, justly I imagine, as the most perfect interpreter of Shakespeare's embodiment of fervid passion and devotion in the daughter of Capulet that had ever appeared on the London boards; her singular beauty admirably seconding her rare powers, and turning the heads of half the fashionable young men of the day. She was universally respected, was often admitted to the best society, and had several times assisted at private theatricals.

It so happened that she was then in Dublin, and, for the time, without an engagement. The proposal was, to write to her and ask her, on her own terms, to come to them and take the part of Juliet. This was eagerly acceded to, and a letter despatched accordingly.

The part of Romeo had been assigned to a gentleman of fortune and family. Mr. Becher of Ballygibbin, County Cork; *jeune encore*, as the French say, for he was still on the right side of forty, and excelling all his companions in histrionic talent. To him, as soon as the invitation had been given, came one of his intimate friends. "Becher," said he, "take my advice before it is too late. Throw up the part of Romeo. I daresay some one else can be found to take it."

"Back out of the part? And why pray? Do you think my acting is not worthy to support Miss O'Neill's?"

"You act only too well, my good fellow, and identify yourself only too perfectly with the characters you undertake. I know Miss O'Neill well; there can't be a better girl, but she's dangerous. She's perfectly bewitching in her *rôle*. It is notorious that no man ever played Romeo to her Juliet without falling in love with her. Now I'd be sorry to see you go to the stage for a wife."

"Marry an actress! and at my age! Do you take me for a fool?"

"Anything but that, Becher. I do take you for a whole-souled, splendid fellow, with a little touch of romance about him, impressible by beauty, and still more alive to grace and talent and I really can't make up my mind to address even that glorious creature as Mrs. 'Becher.'"

"Do talk sense, Tom. If I hadn't agreed to play Romeo, I'd go and offer to take the part now, just to convince you how ridiculous you are."

"Well, all I hope is that the enchantress will decline."

But she accepted. Becher played Romeo, shared the fate of his predecessors; was engaged within the month, and married a few weeks afterwards.

My father spent several days with them at their country-seat. He was charmed with Mrs. Becher, in whom, he said, he could not detect the slightest trace of the actress. And the marriage, my father told us, seemed to have been eminently fortunate, though up to that time they had no children.

In the sequel they had several children. Mr. Becher, eight years later, was created a baronet, lived thirty years with his wife, and was succeeded, in 1850, by their son, Sir Henry Wrixon Becher, the present baronet. Lady Becher died only last winter, loved and mourned by friends and dependants; having survived her husband more than twenty years.

With one other love-story, also brought by my father from Ireland, I shall conclude this chapter.

The names I have forgotten, but the circumstances happened in a country-house, the hereditary seat of an ancient and wealthy Irish family.

There, to its owner then only a few years married, was born a son and heir. There was, in his household at the time, a young woman of eighteen, fairly educated, but in humble circumstances, who had been retained as dependant rather than servant, filling the posts of nursery-governess, and assistant house-keeper. Let us call her Miss Norah Fitzpatrick. She was faithful, industrious, and good-looking, but with no pretension to beauty.

The infant heir of some thirty or forty thousand a year, committed to her care and daily carried about in her arms, became much attached to his nurse. His affection seemed to increase with years; and at the age of eight or ten, he used to call her his wife, and say he intended to marry her by and by. He returned from college some months before he was eighteen, and, true to his first fancy, after a time he proposed to Miss Fitzpatrick, then just twice his age. She told him that both for his sake and hers, such a marriage was not to be thought of; the great disparity of age, she said, was alone reason sufficient; but, aside from that, the marriage with one so far beneath him in social position would go nigh to break his parents' hearts and make himself unhappy; for which she could never forgive herself, and which would render her miserable, even as his wife. And in this she persisted.

Thereupon the youth ceased to urge his suit; but after moping about for some weeks in a listless way, took to his bed with a low fever. When the family physician, an enlightened man, found the usual remedies unavailing and the mother in despair, he said to her, "Madam, it is my duty to tell you that your son's condition seems to me the result of deep-seated mental depression. Something preys on his mind; try to find out what it is; you may then be able to do more for him than all the medicines in the pharmacopœia."

The next day the mother did her best to call forth her son's confidence, but for a time in vain. All she could get from him was, "It's no use, mother dear. It will only vex you."

But when she implored him, weeping, to tell her, he said at last: "I have loved Norah all my life. I asked her, since I came home, to marry me; but she refused me, because she said it would make us all unhappy. And say what I will, she sticks to it."

"My son, my son, how could you think of such a thing?"

"I told you it was no use, mother; I knew you would take it just so; but I haven't spirit to live without her."

Then the father was consulted; he was furious; but the patient's fever increased from day to day, and the mother's heart began to relent. "If it should kill him!" she said to her husband; "you know how you felt when I refused you the first time."

That touched him, but he held out three days longer, the young man appearing to sink all the time. Then, one morning, he got up with a sudden resolution and sought his son's bedside. "Listen to me, my dear boy," he said; "your happiness is my first object, but it is my duty to prevent you from doing anything rashly, which you may repent all your life afterwards. You are scarcely eighteen; that is too young to marry. I want you to make the tour of Europe before you settle down. I will find you an excellent tutor as companion. But I ask from you that you will not return to Ireland till you are twenty-one, nor correspond, meanwhile, with Miss Fitzpatrick. I must say she has acted very honorably; and if, when you return, you still remain of the same mind and she will accept you, your mother and I will not withhold our consent. But you must promise, on your honor as a gentleman."

And so the bargain was struck, the parents doubtless believing that three years would cure a boyish fancy. Two weeks saw the son well again, and prepared for his journey. On the very day he was twenty-one, he returned to claim his parents' promise; overpersuaded Norah; and my father, invited to their country-seat ten years afterwards, found them, he told us, one of the happiest looking couples he had ever seen. The lady did seem more like the young man's mother than his wife; but a thousand nameless, unobstrusive attentions testified that a marriage which the world doubtless pronounced preposterous was a true conjugal union, after all.

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* In a letter from my father to myself, written soon after Anne's death, he says of her: "I never knew a judgment more severely correct than hers upon all subjects connected with the mind and dispositions. Whatever was needed to assist her in the education of her pupils she studied with unabating interest; and even you would be surprised to hear of the number of works which she read to store her mind with useful facts on all subjects for the benefit of those under her charge. She had patience, perseverance, and an accurate knowledge of human nature, and took an interest in the progress and happiness of her pupils, such as I have never seen excelled."

POSEY'S NUGGET.

BY LOUIS A. ROBERTS.

When the California "gold fever" broke out in the spring of 1849, Doctor Hanchett was living at Clarksville, in Southern Indiana. Dr. Hanchett, it should be stated, had received his professional title not by the favor of any medical college or other learned institution, but through the simpler and less formal method that obtains among the free and generous people amongst whom his lines were cast. The process may be explained in a few words. In the fall of 1846, a recruiting station was established at Vicksburg to enlist volunteers for the war with Mexico, and Hanchett, at that time a resident of Vicksburg, and laboring in a profession—the saltatorial, to wit—a shade less illustrious than that to which he was soon to attain, was the first man in the city to enlist. This momentous circumstance procured for him not only the prompt recognition of a patriotic press, which blazoned his name abroad with so many eccentricities of spelling that he came near losing his identity, but also gave him a claim in courtesy to such a position in the organization of his company, within the grasp of the mere high private, as he might select. After due deliberation he chose that of company commissary—an office unknown, I think, to the United States Army Regulations, but none the less familiar to our volunteer service. To this post he was promptly appointed by his captain; and, thus placed in the line of promotion, he rose rapidly till he attained the rank of hospital steward. The thing was done. Hanchett was Doctor Hanchett from that day, and the title was very much the larger part of the man ever after. How he had lived for forty years or more without it is still a mystery.

When the war was over, Doctor Hanchett stranded upon the northern bank of the Ohio, in the State of Indiana. As a returning brave he was, naturally, quite warmly received. As a veteran not unwilling to recount his adventures by flood and field, he speedily became famous as the hero of many deeds of valor and of blood. He had been assistant surgeon of his regiment, it appeared, but nevertheless had fought in the ranks in every important engagement of the war from Monterey to Churubusco, and the number of men who had fallen by his own hand from first to last he could not undertake to estimate. Though traces of a somewhat lively imagination might be detected in most of the doctor's stories, there is really no good reason to doubt that he spoke the simple truth when he averred that with his red right hand he had mowed down men like grass, for he actually retained the position of hospital steward throughout the whole term of his service.

Finding himself after the lapse of a few weeks not without honor in his Indiana town, he struck out suddenly one day a brilliant idea; he would devote his remaining years to the practice of the profession into which fortune had so kindly inducted him. He hired a house, hung out his banner, and wrote to his wife and daughter, who had remained at Vicksburg, to come on immediately to his new home, as his fortune was now made.

Hanchett had married, at an early stage in his original career, the only daughter of a bankrupt Vicksburg storekeeper. This young woman, who had doubtless found ample opportunity for the practice of domestic economy in the paternal home, soon proved herself to be a most excellent housekeeper on her own account. She was a jewel indeed to her improvident husband, who, finding that she made shift by one means or any other to keep the family larder supplied, whether he kept her purse supplied or not, dismissed a great care from his mind at once and for ever, and thenceforth to the end of his days never exerted himself beyond his natural bent. As the daughter, Dora Hanchett, grew to womanhood, she divided her mother's burden with her, and ultimately, as the mother's health failed, relieved her of it almost entirely.

The family once reunited and domiciled in their new home, it soon became evident to the most casual observer that Dora exercised the functions of commander-in-chief of that force, and that the doctor, notwithstanding his brilliant record in the field, had been incontinently reduced to the ranks, and subjected to a rather rigid discipline. Let it not be inferred, however, that Dora ruled with a high hand or with a rod of iron. Far from it. She was the quietest and meekest of tyrants, controlling not by conscious will or effort, but by divine commission, as many a woman does.

Not only was Dora the head of the household in the sense of directing its internal affairs, but she likewise proved herself to be its mainstay as bread-winner. The doctor under her hands became a dignified and not unornamental figure-head to the concern, in whom she took a certain filial pride. His banner was still allowed to hang upon the outer wall, and, as some slight justification of the legend borne upon it, the semblance of an office was maintained for him, where he spent many solitary and irksome hours daily in the semblance of professional study and work. But his income did not amount even to a semblance, and upon Dora, therefore, devolved the task of maintaining the cuisine as well as the character of the establishment. She had been accustomed to this duty indeed ever since, upon becoming a school-teacher at the age of sixteen, she had proved her capacity to perform it. She early found her place in the public schools of Clarksville, and so the pot was soon boiling merrily, and the demands of the doctor's magnificent appetite were duly honored at sight.

Thus, Doctor Hanchett was enabled to live a life of elegant leisure, devoid of care and fruitful of enjoyment to a man of his temperament, for some fourteen months. Then he was suddenly smitten with the "gold fever," and went raging through the town, seeking whom he might infect. It was one of the curiosities of this singular epidemic that it claimed not only those youthful and adventurous spirits who were by common consent held to be its legitimate victims, but carried off also old and infirm men, chronic invalids, and, stranger still, such shiftless, incompetent and altogether worthless cumberers of the ground as this Doctor Hanchett; thus proving itself to be, like most other contagions, a not entirely unmixed evil.

Not wholly through the efforts of Doctor Hanchett, it is safe to say, but in due process of time and events, a company was mustered in Clarksville to go overland to California, as so many other companies were mustered in hundreds of other towns all over the country in that memorable spring of '49. This company composed principally of men from the surrounding country, and containing only two or three residents of the village proper, regarded itself as peculiarly fortunate in being able to count among its members a gentleman like Doctor Hanchett, who besides being a physician, was an old campaigner, and thus likely to prove doubly desirable as a comrade in an expedition like that upon which they were embarked.

It being definitely settled that the doctor was to march with his company upon a certain day not far distant, it devolved upon his chancellor of the exchequer to provide the sinews of war. Whether Dora found this duty an agreeable one or not, she performed it promptly and cheerfully. The little hoard that by the sharpest economy the frugal girl had contrived to save from her earnings was placed in the doctor's hands without reserve, to be appropriated, first to the purchase of an outfit, and next to the defrayment of the general expenses of the campaign.

Proverbially careful and judicious in the expenditure of money, as may be supposed, in the purchase of his supplies on this occasion Doctor Hanchett quite outshone himself. Besides the indispensable pans and shovels and picks with which every man provided himself, Doctor Hanchett laid in an assortment of miscellaneous drugs and surgical instruments, that added a new lustre to his distinction in the eyes of his comrades. But it was in the compilation of his wardrobe and his deadly weapons that he displayed an individuality of taste altogether unique. It being now the month of May, and the journey across the plains being expected to occupy about three months, the doctor, who was a small man, bought first a great—uncommonly great—coat, that fitted him about as snugly as a sentry-box might have done; secondly, a pair of cavalry boots, the tops of which towered almost to his eyebrows; and thirdly, a silk hat of the very finest and very tallest description to be found in the market. Then he purchased a pair of large Colt's revolvers, handsomely mounted in silver, and had his name engraved on the plate in bold letters—"Elias Hanchett, M. D.;" and his armory was completed by the addition of numerous and various knives of vast length and breadth of blade, into the hasp of each of which was let a neat silver plate, upon which was engraved his name—"Elias Hanchett, M.D. Thus clad and thus arsenaled, he bore down upon Dora with much elation as she was returning home from her school, and proudly challenged her admiration. Of course the loving girl responded heartily, notwithstanding her thrifty and methodical soul was racked to see such few of her hardly-earned coins as remained unexpended falling to the ground and rolling away in all directions as the doctor turned pocket after pocket inside out in search of yet another and another knife to surprise her withal.

At last the company got off, going by river to Council Bluffs, and thence striking out upon the almost interminable trail that, however surely it might lead to fortune, was far from being a royal road thereto. It was two months later when a member of the party, compelled by ill-health to abandon the tedious journey and return home, brought to Clarksville the first intelligence of the achievements of Doctor Hanchett in the capacity of a physician and surgeon in actual practice. These achievements cannot be recorded here, but a single incident may be mentioned as indicating the estimation in which the doctor's skill speedily came to be held by his companions. Before the expedition had been three weeks upon the march his surviving comrades, taking alarm at the rapidly augmenting number of lonely graves with which they were dotting the dreary trail, hastily formed a conspiracy to despoil him of his enginery of death. Under the silent stars, what time the doctor was sleeping the deep sleep of the overworked practitioner, his medicine-case and his miscellaneous assortment of cutlery were quietly spirited away, and were never seen again. The doctor proclaimed his loss upon waking in the morning, and felt it keenly. He declared, however, that he deplored the casualty chiefly in the interest of his companions, who were thus deprived, at one fell blow, of his further services; and he cursed very heartily, in the same interest, the "dastardly red-skins," whom he assumed to be guilty of the theft.

Dora and her mother waited long and anxiously for a letter from the doctor's own hands, and after many months it came. It was dated from "the Heart of the Gold Region," and, after asking them to join him in due ascriptions of thanks to the Almighty Powers for his deliverance from many perils and his safe arrival in the promised land, and after passing lightly over the invaluable services he had been able to render to his companions in his professional capacity—it was not for a modest man to dwell upon these—the doctor proceeded to state frankly that his success in the gold-fields had far exceeded his most sanguine hopes; that, indeed, he might even then call himself an opulent man, inasmuch as nothing but the necessary papers were wanting to confirm him in the possession of a half interest in the Big Grizzly Claim—a claim that promised an enormously rich yield as soon as arrangements could be perfected for developing it. He advised his daughter to give up her school at once, and to begin to prepare herself for that happy change in her circumstances which was now so near at hand; and he closed by requesting her to send him by return of mail fifty dollars, and more if she could possibly spare more, as he urgently required a little money for "present needs."

Is it necessary to say how this clear-headed and conscientious girl acted upon reading this transparent balderdash? She knew, as well as you and I know, that the whole thing was a clumsy game of her worthy sire to deplete once more the little hoard that had been slowly growing during his absence. She knew that her mother, who had worn her life out trying to support an ornamental husband, was fast failing in health, and might very soon require such attendance as nothing but money could procure. And of course she went directly to the bank, drew out her entire deposit, and sped it on its way to Elias Hanchett, M. D., before the sun went down.

It was nearly a year after the arrival of his first letter when another epistle was received from the absent doctor. Bad news this time—the worst of bad news. He had been stricken down by a terrible malady at a most critical moment in his affairs, and the consequence was that his interests had suffered irretrievably. He might call himself, in short, a ruined man. He felt that his distress of mind, together with the physical anguish of his disease, was more than he could bear up against for many hours longer. It was hard for an old man to die thus among strangers, far from his own hearthstone and the gentle influences that clustered round it. But he should be consoled in his last hour by the reflection that he had always maintained his family liberally, and had tried to be a kind and indulgent husband and father; and he hoped that his daughter, thus left alone in the world without any earthly protector, would not wholly despair, but would strive for his sake to bear up against adversity, and prove herself worthy of the father who had lost his life in trying to serve her in his old age. And so farewell! His eyes were now about to close for the last time upon the scenes of this earth. Signed Elias Hanchett, M. D., with the customary flourish beneath the name, as bravely executed as if the writer might have twenty years of life ahead of him yet. But stay! P. S. Would not his dear daughter, for whom he had sacrificed so much, grant him one last little favor? He had not means enough left out of the sad wreck of his fortune to procure him decent burial. Would she not send him a small sum for that purpose? She might direct it to his own address, for if he were gone it would be received by a friend, who would apply it faithfully according to the directions he should leave. "And now again farewell! And may we meet above!" Signed Elias Hanchett, M. D. Flourish as usual.

I do not believe that Dora Hanchett's honest estimate of this letter was very far different from our own. I am persuaded that she was mentally incapable of being seriously deceived by it. But the heart of woman is the mystery of the universe. In the face of her honest judgment, in the truth of that clear common sense that constituted the strongest trait in her character, this absurd girl went about bemoaning in dead earnest and in the bitterest grief the death of her father. This lasted a week; by which time she had succeeded in convincing her mother, at least, that the affliction was a real one; and that good lady, being finally, as she believed, released from her responsibility, and having no occasion to live longer, quietly and peacefully passed away. And Dora, by the light of this actual sorrow, came after a while to acknowledge to herself that she had been breaking her heart over a fictitious one.

Of course the money had gone on before this time, and she was far from wishing to recall it now. If her father was alive, he was welcome to it, she said, for he could not possibly put it to a worse use than that to which it had been dedicated.

A girl as good as Dora could not be left friendless, whatever domestic affliction she might suffer; and so with all her trouble she had no opportunity to become absorbed in her sorrow. It would have pained her unspeakably if she had been aware that her friends generally, however, so far from inclining to grieve with her grief at the possibility of her father's death, were quite unanimous in the view that such a dispensation would be "the best thing for Dory that ever turned up." For her part, she could not, after all, rid her mind of the apprehension that her father might possibly have been in as serious extremity as his letter represented. And if so, and she neglected to do her utmost to succor him in his need, what peace could she ever find in this world again? In this way she dwelt upon the subject, until at last she convinced herself that her whole duty lay in nothing less than an immediate effort to go to him. If, fortunately, she should find him alive and well, she would gladly share his fortune, however hard it might be, and would never leave him so long as he lived. But if, as she feared, he should prove to be indeed sick and near his end in that wild region, where, she asked, should his daughter be but at his side?

This is the ridiculous way in which such headstrong creatures as this Dora Hanchett are accustomed to meet you when you seek to point out to them the unreasonableness of a line of conduct on which they have set their hearts.

Deaf to all arguments, therefore, Dora shut up her house and set about making preparations for her journey. In the adjoining county, as she had learned, a company of gold-hunters had been organized, and was then on the point of starting for the Sacramento Valley, in which was situated the little town from which her father had last written. Of this company of sixty men she knew but one, and he was a mere boy in years, the youngest of the party. This was Hiram Bridge, familiarly termed Posey in honor of his native county, who four years before had been one of Dora's first pupils in her Clarksville school. She was little more than a girl herself at that time, and Hiram was her biggest boy; and her recollection now of the bond of good-fellowship that soon grew up between herself and the shy, overgrown but not overbright lad relieved her of any hesitation she might otherwise have felt in applying to him to obtain permission for her to accompany his party to its destination.

"Yes, you can go, Miss Hanchett," Posey quietly replied to her appeal.

"But will the rest of the men be willing?" she suggested.

"Doesn't signify," said Posey.

She did prevail on him, however, as a matter of form, to mention the subject to his comrades; but as he never took the trouble to report to her what action, if any, they took in the matter, she started at last, relying altogether on his single friendship for protection. That was no mean reliance, though, as she soon began to realize. He was an immense fellow, six feet two in height, and broad in proportion; and he soon proved to Dora that, however readily he had undertaken her safe conduct, he did not lightly esteem that charge, but was determined to aid and befriend her in every way possible. Thus at the outset she found herself relieved of much of the embarrassment and annoyance she had believed to be inseparable from such a journey in such companionship. Posey himself she did not find to be companionable in the ordinary sense of that word, notwithstanding his constant kindness. He was of a quiet turn, reserved of speech, rather forbidding of countenance, and did not wear his excellent heart upon his sleeve. There were few surface indications of the gold that was in him. Dora was not long, however, in finding the auriferous vein; and, to drop metaphor, she soon became conscious of a very warm sentiment of gratitude growing up in her heart toward her uncouth guide, philosopher and friend.

Posey's outfit consisted of a pair of powerful mules and a covered wagon, with the usual mining and cooking utensils, and the provisions necessary for the journey. In the forward part of this wagon, while the expedition was on the march, Dora sat enthroned; and in its dusky recess she made her couch at night. Not only did the loyal Posey devote himself to her guardianship by day, but he kept watch and ward by night, sitting bolt upright within a couple of yards of his precious charge until the stars grew pale in the dawn. Then, if opportunity offered, he would snatch a surreptitious nap, still disdaining to lie down, however; and it frequently occurred that the earlier risers in the camp would discover Posey sitting on the ground, embracing his nether limbs with his long arms, while his head, with its close-cut, sandy hair, sank slumberous between his towering knees, like the sun going down between two mountain-peaks. To such a length did he carry these romantic vigils that he shortly came to look as gaunt and hollow-eyed as Famine. In addition to which he had to endure no end of raillery from his not too considerate or fastidious companions, who, so far from inclining to harm a hair of Dora's head, were generally wholly indifferent to her presence, and could not enter into Posey's solicitude on her behalf.

Just here, also, Jake Savage, who had spent a year in the mines and was piloting the present expedition, was reminded of a story, which he obligingly related to Posey, *apropos*.

"You see, Posey," said Jake, "me and Hooker—Hooker was my chum—had been scratchin' and washin' for about seven or eight dollars a day down there to McCracken's Bend, till we got disgusted, and we made up our minds that if we couldn't make more'n that we might as well give up and strike for the States. But just then who should come along but little Bill Skinner, bound all so fast for up the gulch? Bill had been prospectin' around all summer on his own hook, but hadn't struck nothin' yet, and was so much worse off than we was that Hooker and me concluded to stay by a while longer. A day or two afore, we found out, little Bill had run across a Digger somewhere that had told him—the Lord knows how, for I never see a Digger that could talk English more'n a mule,—but this Digger told little Bill that up the gulch there was rich diggin's. And so Bill was on the rampage to get there. Of course me and Hooker we didn't take no stock in that yarn, and little Bill went off alone.

"A couple of months after that me and Hooker see we'd got to do something pretty quick or starve, and so we made up our minds

to prospect a little. We headed up the gulch, but without ever thinkin' of little Bill, and as indications was good, we kept on in the same direction for a couple of days. It was on the third day out, and we'd got about twenty miles from the Bend, and hadn't struck nothin' yet to bet on, when all of a sudden Hooker yells out, 'Holy Moses, Jake! look-a there!' and what do you s'pose we see?

"About as fur as from here to that mule there, leanin' ag'in a tree, sot little Bill Skinner—what was left of him, I mean, for he was as a dornick. And what do you s'pose he was a-settin' on? A nugget of the pure metal worth forty thousand dollars! Yes, sir! We could see in a minute how it was. Bill had found this nugget, and bein' weak for want of grub, of course he couldn't carry it. So he had sot down on it to guard it. And there he sot and sot. He dassent go to sleep for fear somebody'd hook it, and he couldn't leave it to get any grub for the same reason. We could see he'd browsed 'round on the bushes as fur as he could reach, but that couldn't keep him alive long, and so there he'd sot and sot till finally he'd pegged out.

"And that's what's the matter with Posey. I wakes up in the night and see him a-settin' thar by that wagon, and says I to myself, 'Thar sets Posey on his nugget!' And one of these fine mornin's we'll find nothin' but Posey's bones a-settin' there, and his buttons and such like."

About this time, as they were now nearing the region where danger from Indian raids was apprehended, Savage's company and another party from Illinois joined forces for mutual protection, and all proceeded thenceforward under Savage's direction. Accompanying this Illinois party was a woman going out to the diggings to join her husband, who was prospering, and had sent for her to come on. The two women thereafter keeping constantly together, Posey felt his responsibility so far lightened that he occasionally indulged himself in a "square" night's sleep, while Dora and her new-found friend slumbered beneath his ample wagon-cover.

His partial separation from Dora, occasioned by the advent of this other woman on the scene soon opened his eyes to the fact that a total separation from her would take the ground entirely from under his feet, and leave him in a condition that he felt disinclined to contemplate so long as there might be a chance to avert such a calamity. He accordingly improved the first opportunity that offered, and cast himself at the feet of Dora—literally, mind you, on the lee side of a sage bush—and lisped his love. On this sacred ground let us tread as lightly as may be. Suffice it that Posey's suit prospered, and that presently a little programme came to be agreed upon between the contracting parties to this effect: They would go on for the present precisely as if nothing had happened—Dora to seek her father and Posey to seek his fortune. As soon, however, as Dora should have succeeded in restoring the doctor to health, or had haply buried him, Posey should be notified, and they would thereupon be married. Then Dora would open a school somewhere, wherever she might chance to find the indispensable children, while Posey, accompanied by his newly-fledged father-in-law, if perchance that individual should be spared, would launch into the mines and conquer Fortune at the point of the pick.

Time flew fast with the lovers after this, and they were quite startled one day when Savage informed them that they were upon the very borders of the promised land.

That evening, an hour before sunset, the train was halted for the night at a point whence the travel-worn adventurers could look down for the first time into the Sacramento Valley, and render thanks in their various ways that the end of their tedious pilgrimage was almost reached. As Dora Hanchett and Posey stood together upon a green knoll, following with their eyes the winding trail that their feet were to descend on the morrow, they descried, toiling slowly toward them, one of those returning bands of unsuccessful and discouraged veterans—the reflux of the great wave of immigration constantly pouring into the golden valley—which they had frequently met in the course of their long journey. As the cavalcade drew nearer, Dora's attention fixed itself upon a curious figure that brought up the rear. Mounted upon a loose aggregation of bones and ears that purported to be a mule, this mysterious figure gradually approached, while Dora watched it as if fascinated. On and on it came, and still she gazed, spell-bound. Opposite her it paused. There was no longer any doubt: it was He. Clad in the mangled remains of the original great-coat, the original boot-tops yet towering in the region of his ears, and the upper half of the original beaver crowning his well-developed brain, there He was. Slowly and carefully he descended from the back of his shambling steed, settled himself well in his boots, pulled up the collar of his great-coat—and there was little but collar left of it—tipped the curtailed and weather-beaten stovepipe to the proper angle, opened his paternal arms and feebly embraced his daughter. He announced himself to all concerned as a broken man—a poor unfortunate going home to die, where his bones might rest with those of his ancestors, and where his humble name and his honorable record in the service of his country would be cherished by his fellow-citizens after he should be gone. Providence had surely, in his extremity, drawn his daughter to his succor. Now he was relieved of all anxiety, and might turn his mind to things above. His daughter would fan the spark of life, and keep it burning, God willing, till the old home should be reached. Then he would release her from her labor of love. Then he would be at peace with all the world, and would cheerfully die in the midst of his weeping friends. He had up to this hour been haunted with the apprehension that his poor old frame might be left to moulder somewhere in the wide, inhospitable desert that stretched between him and his roof-tree. Now that dreadful apprehension was banished. The Lord had remembered his own. Dora would walk beside his beast and protect him, and the knowledge that she had thus been instrumental in prolonging her father's life would be her exceeding great reward.

A most enchanting prospect for Dora, was it not? Even she did not put her neck under the yoke until she had first informed her father of her momentous secret, and invited him to assume his rôle in the programme already mentioned as arranged by her lover and herself. But, as a matter of course, he scorned the suggestion. Posey begged and raved, but without avail. The girl never had a question in her mind as to her duty from the moment she saw her father approaching. She must do as he said—go back with him as his slave. There was no help for it.

And so the lovers held a hurried consultation, pledged eternal fidelity and all that, agreed that Posey should go on and make his fortune, and that when Dora should be released by death from her duty to her father he should either come back for her or she should go to him, and then they would be married. Meantime, he engaged to write to her frequently, and she promised to write to him faithfully once every week. And then farewell!

By this time the doctor's party had left him far behind, and naturally, considering the capabilities of his steed, he was growing impatient to move on. The early stars were already coming out, and he testily reminded Dora, as she lingered over her leavetaking, that there was no more time to lose. And so, without a murmur, the devoted soul turned her back upon all her new-born hope and joy, and dutifully took up the long and dreadful homeward march on foot. And Posey, his heart in his mouth and his tongue charged with unutterable execrations, gazed gloomily down into the darkening valley, that half an hour before had been filled with a radiance "that never shone on land or sea." And as he gazed all the bad in him persistently rose up to curse the despicable author of his woe, while all the good in him — about an even balance — rose up to bless the fast-disappearing idol of his heart.

Slowly and painfully, day after day, the little company of stragglers toiled on toward their distant homes, the redoubtable doctor, with his unwilling beast and his willing bond-woman, ever bringing up the rear. No one but Dora herself could know how grievously she suffered in her chains—how her very heart's blood was gradually consumed by the vampire whom she chose to cherish and obey because it was her misfortune to be his daughter.

The old home was reached at last. On the whole, the doctor had rather enjoyed the journey, and brought to the family board, as of yore, a tremendous appetite. He "resumed practice at the old stand" without delay, publishing a card to that effect in the village newspapers. He seemed scarcely to note the absence of his wife, who for a quarter of a century had been wearing her life out in a vain endeavor to justify his existence on this globe. In short, he speedily settled back into his old habit of life, and appeared to have totally forgotten that he had come home to die. And Dora, too, soon lapsed into her old routine of schoolkeeping, and so once more the pot boiled merrily. Once a week, with scrupulous regularity, she wrote her promised letter to Posey, and she waited long and anxiously for some word from him, but in vain. Weary weeks lost themselves in months, and month after month crept slowly away till almost a year had passed, and still the faithful soul famished for some token that she was not forgotten. Then one evening she went home from her school to find that the heavens had fallen. Her father, whom she had left four hours before apparently in the highest health and spirits, was dead. The village physician attributed his sudden death to apoplexy, which seems illogical. But he was dead, whatever the cause, and his orphaned daughter mourned him with as genuine a grief as ever wrung a human heart.

When in process of time the first transports of grief had subsided there seemed to be nothing left for Dora to do but to concentrate all the overflowing tenderness and devotion of her heart upon her lover, and to brood and pine over his long-continued silence. She never doubted that he had written to her, for the mail-service to and from the gold regions was notoriously unreliable in those days, and she was by no means the only one who looked in vain for letters thence. At last she could bear the suspense no longer. The spring had opened early, and a party in a neighboring town was to start for the diggings by the middle of April. This party, in which were already included two women, Dora resolved to join. Once let her reach that indefinite region denominated "the mines," and she felt the most unquestioning faith in her ability to find her lover.

And so once more the dauntless girl set out upon that long and tedious journey of three thousand miles. Not many weeks passed before the inevitable homeward-bound stragglers began to be encountered, and of these Dora eagerly sought information concerning the object of her quest.

"Bridge? No, marm," was almost uniformly the reply to her first question in that direction.

"He was sometimes called Posey," she would then suggest; and at last she found a man who acknowledged that he knew Posey. "He was at the Buny Visty in Carter's Gulch at last accounts," this individual informed her, but he omitted to commit himself as to the nature of Posey's occupation. "Wife, p'r'aps?" he observed, incidentally.

"No, sir," said Dora.

"Sister?"

"No."

"Ah! Well, he's a stocky chap, that Posey, and ought to make his fortune in the mines, if anybody could. But nobody can't—take my word for't. Look at me!"

He was a spectacle indeed. The retrogressive Doctor Hanchett had been quite an exquisite in the matter of apparel compared with this tatterdemalion. With Dora's companions he was less reticent concerning the character and calling of Posey than he had been with Dora herself. By his account it appeared that Posey had spent about a month in the mines without striking a single streak of luck to hearten him. At the end of that time, completely discouraged, he went to the nearest village and advertised himself as willing to work for his board at anything that might offer. The thing that offered was a situation as assistant bar-tender at the Buena Vista gambling-house. Posey accepted this situation with ardor, and discharged the delicate duties pertaining to the place so satisfactorily that he very soon found himself promoted to the distinguished position of "stool pigeon." In this capacity he developed shining talents, and the Buena Vista's gaming-tables soon became the most famous resort in all that region for those confiding birds whose favorite amusement appears to lie in being plucked. And thus Posey went on prospering until he achieved a partnership in the concern; and his partner soon after being suddenly called to that bourne whence no traveler returns, Posey found himself sole proprietor and manager of an uncommonly flourishing concern in an uncommonly lively line of business.

All this information was carefully kept by her companions from the ears of Dora, of course; and she, having obtained the long-coveted trace by means of which she felt sure that she could not fail to find her lover, was quite cheerful and happy throughout the remainder of the seemingly endless journey.

The end neared at last, however, and as Dora recognized the familiar landmarks that told her she had almost reached the fruition of her hope deferred, her eyes brightened daily, a new flush came into her thin cheeks; and though she grew more quiet and abstracted than formerly, it was plain that her reveries had no tinge of darkness, her hope no shadow of fear, her faith no alloy of doubt. And when the time came for her to part with the good people in whose company she had traveled so far, she bade them adieu with a light heart, and at once set out alone by stage for Carter's Gulch.

Reaching the straggling, ill-conditioned village at nightfall, she asked the driver, as she alighted in front of the stage-office, to direct her to the Buena Vista.

"The Buny Visty! The Buny Visty's not a hotel, ma'am," that individual explained. "It's the Golden Gate that you want, I reckon."

"No, sir," she replied confidently. "I have a friend at the Buena Vista—Mr.—Mr. Posey. Perhaps," she went on, with a little tremor in her voice, "you can tell me if he is well?"

"Posey!" He stopped some moments at the word and looked in blank amazement at the delicate, tender, unmistakably honest face that confronted him. Then he continued hastily: "Never better. Saw him yesterday morning. You see that green lantern? That's the Buny Visty. Good-night, ma'am. I stay here—if you should want a friend, you know. Good-night."

Dora thanked him for his kindness, returned his salutation, and tripped away with unruffled spirits. She had been so much concerned to conceal her own agitation as she mentioned the name of her lover that she had quite overlooked the astonishment with which that name had seemed to transfix the driver.

As she picked her way along the dark and muddy sidewalk she could not help complaining a little petulantly to herself because the stage-office had not been located nearer to that distant green lantern. But she was not the girl to lose heart now. Bravely she plodded on, and when at last she was able to discern the words "Buena Vista" upon the beacon toward which she was toiling, suddenly her heart gave a great bound, the tears rushed to her eyes, her knees quaked beneath her, and from her pious soul there went up an earnest thanks-giving to the dear Father of us all for His great mercy in bringing her safely to the end of her momentous journey.

It was some minutes before she could so far compose herself as to be able to proceed; and when she did move forward again, I think a vague notion of the true character of the Buena Vista began to cast a shadow upon her ardor. As she came within a couple of rods of the isolated wooden building in front of which the green lantern was suspended she was suddenly startled at hearing several shots discharged in quick succession within, and a minute later three or four men rushed hastily into the street and hurried away, evidently without noticing her, though they passed within a few feet of her as she stood, almost paralyzed with alarm, just outside the door. Her fright was gone in a moment, however—soon enough, indeed, to enable her to satisfy herself that none of these fugitives was the man she sought. As the door stood wide open, there seemed nothing for her but to enter, which she did at once. The front apartment of the saloon, though lighted, she found to be a mere ante-room, bare of all furniture save a few chairs; and without pausing here the resolute girl, who must have had a foreboding of the awful truth by this time, passed on into the gambling-room in the rear. There, stretched upon the floor, shot through the heart, lay the stark form of the man she had journeyed so far and so patiently and hopefully to find. He had grown muscular and brawny since she parted with him. His face, too, had changed, and not for the better: it was flushed, sodden and bearded, and the beard was dyed black. She knelt down beside the corpse and took one of the great hands in her own. It was still warm! But the chill of death crept over it as she held it to her heart, and thus her last ray of hope expired.

She sat still by her dead till the man's former companions came to prepare the body for burial. As it was borne to the lonely grave upon the hillside she walked beside the rough coffin. And when the grave was reached she dropped upon her knees beside it, and poured forth in a clear voice a fervent petition to the Most High to receive, for the sake of the dear Saviour who died for all the world, the soul of this poor sinner.

They had said that she might bear up till the funeral was over, but that then she would break down. She did not. The next morning she set her face to the East, and began again, for the fourth time, that awful journey across the plains. We need not follow her throughout its length. She reached her home worn and sick, but nevertheless at once took up her old school and went on with it a few weeks. And then the end came.

EVILS OF OVERDRESSING.

Of all the snares that beset young girls none are more dangerous than the love of dress. Mothers should be on the alert to guard their daughters against it. Elder sisters should not forget that young eyes are looking at them as examples, and are much more impressed by the living models before them than by any amount of "good advice." Nothing is of greater importance than the companionship permitted to young girls. Not only do overdressed companions induce the wish in themselves to overdress, but if the gratification is denied, "covetousness, envy, hatred, and all uncharitableness" are very likely to find births in hearts that might be otherwise full of better feelings. An undue love of overdress has been only too frequently the cause of ruin of both body and soul. Even in very young children the passion for overdressing is seen. It is the fault of the silly mothers. Little girls, with the exception that their dresses are shorter, are now clothed in all the expensive elaborations that distinguish the attire of grown women. Their skirts are covered with quantities of ornaments, trimmings, frills, and double skirts. Their feet are encased in the most costly boots, and their ankles dislocated with high heels. The hats they wear are in accordance with the rest of the toilette, and even padding and hair dye are not unfrequently used, and deception, cunning, fraud, inculcated along with vanity and reckless expenditure. One would expect to find neat plain dress in Sunday-schools if anywhere. Yet we are often pained to see children who come for free instruction decorated with feathers, gilt ornaments, quantities of ribbons, silk manties and double skirts. Thus arrayed it is not wonderful that a general spirit of rivalry is engendered, scholar vying with scholar, not in the acquirement of learning or piety, but envying one another's finery, or puffed up with vanity at the possession of some special gewgaw, and sneering at their less overdressed companions. We have heard mothers, with tears in their eyes, complain that they could no longer send their children to be instructed on Sundays, because they were unable to buy new or finer clothing, and the children were persecuted on account of their shabbiness—nay, even ridiculed for appearing constantly in the same bonnet—neat, but not very smart. What do the mothers of these children contemplate for them? They are to be the servants, work-girls, eventually the wives of mechanics or small tradesmen; how much better to attire them in simple neatness, to inculcate attention to instruction, to discipline their characters to moral strength, and teach them to lay by the surplus, now wasted, for some better purpose,—to aid their start in life, or to help father and mother on a rainy day. "But they must do as others do, or they will be despised," is the foolish and often fatal argument. The example and persuasion and firm perseverance of one good mother would be sure to induce many who knew her—some, perhaps, who ridicule loudest—to follow her example.—*Sunday Press.*

Miss Una Hawthorne, daughter of the great novelist, is doing excellent philanthropic work in London. She is engaged in establishing a "Preventive Home" for girls in connection with a suburban orphanage. Plunging into the bad homes and destitution of London, she takes girls who are morally likely to fall, or who have fallen, but are not without hope of reform, and gives them work in the laundry of the orphanage, thus at once saving the expense of hired women, which was found to be too heavy, and giving the girls a chance of elevation. The waifs thus picked up receive their instruction in the trade and their board and clothing for the first six months, and wages for the second six months, when permanent places are found for them.

THE RIVER OF LIFE.

Where floweth that full stream of life?
  Tell us, that so our weary feet,
Turned from life's pleasures, pains and strife,
  May by its tide find rest complete.

Rest for the aching heart of grief,
  Rest for the throbbing brow of pain,
From hopes that fade as fades the leaf
  Beneath the autumn's chilling rain.

And on that brink may sorrow die,
  And sin forget its dark dismay,
Knowing those waters passing by,
  Through fields of heavenly verdure stray.

Thou Angel, who for man of old
  The spring of healing waters stirred,
Lead us where ceaselessly hath rolled
  The flood whose voice no man hath heard.

O river, making glad the land
  By angel feet in glory trod,
Bear us, still guided by His hand,
  To the fair city of our God!

THE LESSON OF REVERSES.

"Sit here, dear Florence, in the shade, and I will tell you what you have been dying to know all day. Yes, Floy, Charles Sumner loves me, and as soon as his father return we are to be married. You and Bella Forrest are to be bridesmaids, and John Hamilton and Charles Molineux groomsmen. We are to live in a beautiful house; our furniture and all that is to be supplied from Gillows and the like; and I am to have a lady's-maid, a cook, and a whole host of servants, besides a page in livery to wait at table. There, I cannot say another word."

"Nor need you, dear Louise," returned her friend. "You are out of breath, and it will take a week to recover me. So much good news at once always tires me. I wish you had a bit of sorrow with it."

"You mean, envious thing!" said Louise. "No, I will give you that part. You love to cry. It would be a luxury that you would appreciate to have everything go wrong, so that 'a few natural tears might come down your cheeks.'"

"No, Louise, I would not cast a single thorn in your pathway; but say, in that long race after happiness which ends in a mansion and a retinue of servants, is there not a shadow that sometimes beckons to you to pause and think?"

"Not a shadow, Floy," she replied. "I leave all such unsubstantial things to you dreamy, poetic, romantic folks. My visions are all real, and Charles Sumner the true knight who gives me a bright home and all pleasant surroundings in it."

O, love and youth! with what bright rose-tints do ye invest all objects! I could not bear to throw a cloud over her, and I left her singing a gay song and turning over her wedding dresses, as light of heart as if no shadows were in the world. I needed not to wish that Louise should have sorrow. It came faster than I had anticipated.

Charles Sumner was a very unfit person to trust one of her thoughtless temper with. He was reckless and extravagant, on the strength of some two thousands which had been left him, and which he ought to have employed in business. No expensive toy was omitted that could make the house elegant; and although he did not absolutely overdraw his resources, he crippled them so much that, at the end of the month in which the two had been carelessly spending for the approaching bridal, he had not enough remaining to warrant a style of living corresponding to the expensive outfit.

Unfortunately, the parents of Louise were too much dazzled by her marriage with Mr. Sumner to guard her from the danger in which she stood. One word from them would have made her think; but thinking involuntarily without suggestion from others, was not natural to her. I blamed myself afterwards that I had not opened her eyes.

The wedding was magnificent. People of so-called fashion were there, and no expense was spared to render their reception the most elegant and *recherché*. A series of splendid parties were given to the bride, and called forth a corresponding one on her part; and now Louise was fairly launched in the waves of that deceitful and uncertain ocean of popular favor called fashionable society.

Six weeks after the wedding, I went, as I had repeatedly promised to do, to spend a day quietly and alone with Louise. It was near noon when a well-dressed page admitted me. I sat some time with my bonnet on, in the chilly drawing-room, and feeling cold, I found my way to a smaller room, in which were preparations, apparently, for a breakfast. There was a richly chased silver service on a little table, and a luxurious chair was drawn up to it, as if the late riser was coming immediately. But it was half an hour before Louise appeared, and then, although she seemed heartily glad to see me, there was an air of languor and almost of sadness about her. She scarcely touched the breakfast.

"You will think me a lazy girl, Floy, but last night's party fairly overcame me."

I said that I had just called on another friend, a last year's bride, Sophy Howard.

"Ah, poor Sophy! she did not marry very well I am told," said Louise, languidly.

"Yet I found her very prettily situated," I replied. "She has a good house in a pleasant street, with everything comfortable and even handsome about her. She had been driving out alone this morning for a ride; for her husband keeps a horse and a pretty chaise."

"How in the world can Albery afford such an extravagance?" asked Louise, somewhat pettishly. "I am sure I have teased Charles for one often, and even he can't afford it."

I looked round the room, and through the open door, and smiled.

"What did those curtains cost you, Louise?" I asked.

"Forty pounds for each window," she replied

"I won't trouble you for an inventory of the rest of your furniture," said I, "but I will tell you how Sophy lives. She has white muslin curtains only. Her carpets are good substantial Brussels; her chairs well-made with serviceable seats. There are but few tables, but they correspond with the rest of the furniture. In her pleasant drawing-room her books, her pretty work-basket and her piano—that piano which was her dependence for a living, and which she would not let Mr. Albery exchange for a handsomer one—all make her home full of comfort. In her orderly housekeeping she requires but two servants, and one of these is an orphan girl whom she took, not because she needed her, but because the poor thing had no home; and as their horse stands at livery, they do not need a man. Sophy looks happy, and compares her present easy life with that which she experienced as a music governess two years ago."

Louise made no reply, except that "after all, Sophy had not attained to any style."

I had abundant occasion to think, in the course of the day, that style had brought little happiness to poor Louise, and that Sophy was the richer woman of the two. Mr. Sumner came home at seven to an elegant dinner, at which there were wines and fruit of the highest cost. How long could this last!

Sad to tell, ere they had been married twelve months, he was arrested at the suit of a wine merchant, and the unpaid bills of his housekeeping gloomed up darkly before him. They were ruined. Sumner's few thousands were all gone in superfluities that he had been obliged to pay for at the time. He had had no settled income, and there was no one to whom he could reasonably apply for assistance. The house was stripped, and the next time I saw Louise it was in lodging-house.

If this had taught them wisdom it would still have been well; but wisdom does not come to those who do not seek her. The little that remained from the wreck soon went after the rest, and Sumner, mortified and angry with the world, went off to Australia, leaving Louise dependent on her father for a maintenance which he was ill able to afford her.

In every heart there is a spark of energy, which only remains to be wakened into life. Sometimes it is never reached at all, and the individual goes on through existence with the reputation of idleness and inefficiency clinging to his or her character until death.

"Poor Sophy Albery, who did not live in style," was the angel who breathed the breath of life into Louise Sumner's being. After Charles Sumner was really gone, Sophy begged Louise to come to her on a visit, which visit was lengthened into many months. It had been begged as a favor to Sophy, because she wished to have company in her husband's occasional absences. She had that true and perfect kindness which will not let any one feel an obligation too heavily. Then, after some time, she gave up the two morning pupils whom she had always retained, to Louise, and the latter, glad to be able to do something for herself, increased the number to a dozen among her own acquaintances. Contrary to the established rule of story-tellers, who invariably describe a person's friends as leaving them in the time of adversity, it was observable that many of Mrs. Sumner's old visitors had never seemed to think so much of her before. How far it might be owing to Sophy Albery, it is hard to say. Certain it is that her manner towards her unfortunate friend was such as to inspire others with respect and consideration.

It was pleasant to see how quickly Louise, from her habits of indolence, was won into better ways by the example of Sophy Albery. Not all at once did she become perfect, nor yet without much tribulation; but little by little, yet with such hearty good will to do right, that her progress seemed both rapid and real.

Not now did she breakfast at noon. Long before nine she and Sophy were up, planning for the day. At ten Louise went to her first lesson, and returned at four, to have a cheerful afternoon with her friend.

"And oh, Florence!" she would exclaim, "with what feelings of distaste do I recall my first year of married life. Could any one be more blind, more foolish than I have been?"

"But you have so nobly redeemed that time, Louise," I would reply, "that I think of you far more highly than if you had never erred; and after all it was not you who were to blame."

"Oh, don't throw it upon poor Charles, Florence," she would say. "He too is changed, you may believe. Let me read you his letter, received to-day."

And Charley Sumner—the butterfly, the exquisite—wrote of toils and dangers and struggles, that might have appalled a practical economist.

"But I do not complain of them, Louise," he continued. "They have shown me the false state of that society which we once worshipped, but which henceforth I abjure. If Heaven spares my life to return to you, I will make myself worthy of higher and better associations than we once coveted. Meantime, I do not ask you to remit your noble toil. We will both toil until pride and vanity are rooted from our hearts. Since I have been here, I have seen what I never saw before—proud men working for daily bread, and good, noble, generous men working with their own hands at hard, wearing toil for others—ministers, and lawyers, and physicians turned nurses, and the great and good serving the lowly and poverty-stricken. I have seen women, nobly born, washing for a living, and beggars seated in high places. With all these in my mind, I will come to you with clean hands and an upright heart."

* * * * *

Nobly indeed has Charles Sumner redeemed his pledge. Now, indeed, is Louise Sumner a happy wife; for only last week Charles returned, renewed in heart and soul, and worthy to be her husband, the junior hard-working partner of a rising house of business, in a land where honest toil is more valued than the tinsel of stuck-up and would-be fashionable people.

A NATIONAL PLAY-HOUSE.

Mr. Tom Taylor, who seems to share in a measure the eccentricity of his former co-laborer, Mr. Charles Reade, has undertaken to bring out at the Crystal Palace, at Sydenham, a series of Shakespearian plays on what are termed "æsthetic" principles. The distinction intended to be conveyed as between these performances and ordinary ones is clearly set forth. Its main feature is to produce the plays for the interest of Shakespeare and of art rather than for that of any particular manager or actor. To do this Mr. Taylor proposes a kind of popular subscription. In other words, he would effect by the combination of private individuals what in France, Prussia and elsewhere is done by the Government; and he would bring back by this device, so far as the resuscitation is possible, the advantages lost through the abolition of the old patent theatres.

That there were great advantages in the patent system cannot be denied; and if these could be got back again without paying for them more than they are worth, there would be a tangible gain. In some form or another it is probable that the establishment of a national or subsidized theatre in all capital cities would be an excellent thing for art, and generally for the taste and culture of the community. We have lately referred to the fact that nearly every theatre in New York is running "show pieces" or melodramas. Were there a house here in which the plays were regulated as they are at the Théâtre Français, the benefit would be plain. There is perhaps, no argument in favor of national galleries of painting and sculpture, or of national museums, that may not fairly be advanced in behalf of national theatres. All such institutions are "academies" of and for the whole people. The whole public pay for them on the principle of correcting the general taste, which has a tendency, when uncorrected, to decline; since the private caterers of art are always strongly tempted, for obvious reasons of interest, to assist the decadence they are always the first to perceive. The history of our own theatres furnishes cases in point, and, presumably, always will continue to do so; they who live to please must please to live. But a really good national theatre, a theatre, that is, established on sound and permanent principles, would always have a purifying and elevating influence. It is true that, in spite of the Théâtre Français, they have the Opéra Bouffe in Paris and the Gaieté; but this does not endow with less significance the consideration of what, without the Théâtre Français, the Parisian stage would be. We have no idea that Mr. Taylor will succeed in his project at the Crystal Palace any more than he or any one else would succeed in such a project here. People never pay their taxes voluntarily, and this is in the nature of a tax. Enthusiasm for the higher drama is often felt by many, and at some time or other by most people, but the flame is rarely long and steady enough to bring about, through a voluntary system, anything like permanent results. But that a plan like Mr. Taylor's should be conceived at all, that it should be so much discussed, and that the debate should lead to the very general admission that the disease Mr. Taylor aims to cure exists, and somehow ought to be cured, whether he is the proper physician or not, is worthy of serious reflection. What is true of England in this regard is true of America, since the dramatic situation is much the same in London and New York. Our theatres are somewhat handsomer and more comfortable, and the plays in some instances are rather more completely put upon the stage; but otherwise the parallel is complete. Now, we do not believe in such a scheme as Mr. Taylor's, or in any scheme of any individual for this purpose; but it is worth thinking what might be the result of having a national theatre in New York enjoying some kind of steady public support.

If the evil effects of our star system, the rage for spectacle or for what is worse, are ever to be effectively combated or neutralized on our stage, it must be by processes involving in some way the authority and lasting support of the whole community. The experiments of the late Mr. Macready and Charles Kean showed conclusively by their pecuniary results the limitations that must confine individual effort in this direction, and we fear the books of playhouses nearer home than Drury-lane or Oxford-street, where the higher drama has been most expensively brought out, would tell very much the same story. If it could be shown that it is not worth while for the public to go to any expense for a national theatre—that it is not expedient to support such a thing, on grounds like those that recommend the establishment of national art galleries and museums, of course the matter falls to the ground. It may, however, turn out that the more thoroughly the subject is studied the stronger will appear the reasons in favor of founding what would be virtually a national histrionic academy, and that every forcible plea in behalf of like academies for teaching or illustrating the plastic arts may as justly be urged for what would thus become an American Théâtre Français.—*New York Times.*

HINTS TO FARMERS.

St. Vitus dance is a nervous disease which generally follows distemper in young dogs. It consists in a twitching, more or less violently, of the muscles of a limb, or sometimes of the whole body, and not infrequently the animal dies miserably. The dog when affected slightly generally recovers in time if his general health is kept up.

Plaster on Spring Crops.—Plaster is a valuable application to almost all spring crops. Grass, clover, corn, spring wheat, and oats are all benefited by it. It is often the cheapest fertilizer that can be purchased, as 100 pounds per acre at a cost of 50 cents has often doubled the yield of grass or clover. It should be spread evenly on the crop, after it has started to grow, on a quiet morning before the dew has dried off.

Do not Walk when you can Ride.—We have seen a man weight down a roller with stones and then walk behind. Let the horses go right along for a few hours. Then let them rest, and you can go to work.

How to plow and plant admits of greater diversity and a far greater chance for improvement than when to plant. The seasons are, to a great extent, beyond our control, but the chemical and mechanical principles of agriculture are everywhere the same, and we should study to adapt them to the character of the soil and climate. Much of our success will depend on our ability to economize our own strength and energy and the strength of our men and teams. The more thoroughly we study scientific and mechanical principles the greater will be our ability to save labor.

When to Sell Grain.—A correspondent of the *Evening Wisconsin* writes: I would say to you, the one great mistake of the farming community is this, the practice of contracting debts to be paid in the Fall of the year instead of having them come due in June or July, in order to have the benefit of the Fall and Spring markets. I find a great many of the farmers sell their last bushel of grain at one-half or two-thirds its value in order to pay their liabilities, and so lose the profits, thereby damaging themselves and the surrounding community by draining the country of every dollar, leaving nothing to make improvements with. I have noticed that the middle-men are fully aware of your obligations, or, if not, the first thing you do is to inform them by saying, "I must raise some money to pay debts; what can you give me a bushel for my grain?" That gives them to understand that you are obliged to sell, no matter what you get, and they take the advantage of you.

Care of Horses in the Spring.—Many a young horse will take his place in harness at hard work at the plough this spring for the first time, and upon the care and skill with which he is handled for the next three months will largely depend his usefulness for the remainder of his life. If possible let him be worked at first by the side of a gentle, well-broken mate. Let his harness fit exactly and be strong and secure in all its parts. Wherever it touches, and especially of the collar, pads, belly band and breast straps, the leather should be soft, pliant and clear. A decoction of white oak bark may be used with advantage on the parts which are likely to become chafed, and an exact adaptation of the collar to the shoulder and neck is the best safeguard against injury. Remove all dirt from the collar bearings and wash the shoulders at least every day. Feed moderately and give a bran mash once in three or four days. Offer your team water whenever there is an opportunity. Founders come from over-draughts after long abstinence from either food or water. No horse ever becomes so warm but that he may drink a little water with safety, and it is cruelty to refuse it to horses together in hot weather.

Do not over task; clean with a brush thoroughly every night, and bed down with plenty of bright straw, as you value the horse's health or a sound sleep with a clear conscience for yourself.

Asparagus.—Asparagus, one of the best of the greens, is in full season now. Wash, pin up in a cloth, and boil gently in a little pure water about twenty minutes. It goes well with samp and potatoes, without condiments, but some people will not be content without dressing. The least objectionable dressing is the white sauce—milk thickened with wheat-meal and slightly salted. "Asparagus toast" is made by cutting wheat-meal biscuit into thin slices, dipping in hot milk, spreading on a platter, laying the boiled asparagus on it, and pouring over it the white sauce. "Asparagus peas" are prepared by just cutting into bits the tender part of the raw asparagus, boiling in just water enough to cover it until done, skimming out, dishing and pouring over it the white sauce.

SCIENTIFIC AND USEFUL.

FEW realize the power stored in coal for man's use. It is stated as a scientific fact that in a boiler of fair construction a pound of coal will convert 9 lbs. of water into steam. Each pound of steam will represent an amount of energy or capacity for performing work equivalent to 746,666 foot lbs., or, for the whole 9 lbs., 6,720,000 foot lbs. In other words, 1 lb. of coal has done as much work in evaporating 9 lbs. of water into 9 lbs. of steam as would lift 2232 tons 10 feet high.

INDIA-RUBBER.—One criterion for good rubber has been that it would float on water, its specific gravity being 0.985. The addition of any mineral adulteration, of course, renders it heavier than water, and it sinks; but recently cork has been introduced as an adulteration; and as it injures quality without increasing its weight, specific gravity becomes an insufficient test of quality. In some specimens examined at a chemical works in Stolberg, forty to fifty per cent of mineral constituents were found, and to these are attributed the fact that India-rubber finds less use in the arts than might be expected.

SIMILARITY OF GUM AND BLOOD.—From experiments made with pyrogallic acid, Struvé concludes that gums perform a function in plants analogous to that of the blood in animals. Pyrogallic acid in contact with alkalies oxidizes rapidly, becoming of a dark brown color. With other substances, such as gum arabic and blood, the oxidation is slow, a yellow color is produced, and long, needle-like crystals form which are insoluble in water. The least trace of this yellow substance produces an intense blue with ammonia or the other caustic alkalies. The exact composition of this curious substance has not yet been ascertained.

VOICE OF FISHES.—At a recent meeting of the Académie des Sciences, M. Charles Robin read a report on the investigations of M. Dufossé relating to the production of voice in certain fishes. The swimming-bladder appears to be the principal agent in producing voice—at least in those fishes in which that organ has a valve opening into the œsophagus; and even in those in which it is a shut sac, it acts as a sounding-board in augmenting the sound produced by other parts. That it is not exclusively the cause of vocal sounds is shown by the circumstance that some fish are destitute of a swimming-bladder, and are yet capable of producing distinct musical sounds.

THE proprietor of a manufactory of Schweinfurt green—arsenite of copper—in France, was recently sued for negligence to apply proper sanitary protective measures on his premises, such lack of precaution having resulted in the death of two workmen. Judgment having been rendered against him, he applied to the council of health for instructions as to what regulations he ought to impose in his works. At their suggestion, the laborers are now prohibited from bringing their food to the manufactory, or taking their meals there. They are required to wash their hands in acidulated water before each meal; to keep a special suit of clothes for working wear, and to use stout shoes impermeable to arsenical powder; and to leave work instantly on the slightest attack of illness.

COLORS OF MARINE WATERS. — Many local causes influence the colors of marine waters, and give them certain decided and constant shades. A bottom of white sand will communicate a grayish or apple-green color to the water, if not very deep; when the sand is yellow, the green appears more sombre; the presence of rocks is often announced by the deep color which the sea takes in their vicinity. In the Bay of Loango the waters appear of a deep red, because the bottom is there naturally red. The sea appears white in the Gulf of Guinea, yellow on the coast of Japan, green to the west of the Canaries, and black round the Maldive group of islands. The Mediterranean, towards the Grecian Archipelago, sometimes becomes more or less red. The White and Black Seas appear to be named after the ice of the one and the tempests to which the other is subjected.

FAMILY MATTERS.

HOME-MADE CHLORIDE OF LIME.—Dissolve a bushel of salt in a barrel of water, and with the salt water slack a barrel of lime, which should be made wet enough to form a kind of paste. For the purpose of a disinfecter this is nearly as good as that purchased at the shops and drug stores at more than treble the expense.

WASHING MADE EASY.—Go to a druggist and buy one pound of soda ash and one half pound of lime; put it in two gallons of soft water, bring it to a boil, then strain. Put in a stone jar and set away for use. For a medium-sized washing use one pint to two or three pails of water, boiling the clothes one hour before rubbing. Be particular in rinsing.

HOW TO RIPEN TOMATOES.—Pick them from the vines as soon as they have their growth, and put them in an upper room before a sunny south window. A painted floor is best to spread them over, as it will draw the heat much better than an unpainted one. Tomatoes do not ripen fast if left on the vines after the weather gets chilly. Vines that have been kept from the frost can be pulled and hung up by the roots in the cellar. It is said the tomatoes will continue to grow and ripen for weeks.

KID GLOVES (TO CLEAN.)—Place a fine towel folded on the table, on which lay your glove, take a piece of flannel, and with the forefinger dip it lightly into milk, then rub it about twice on a piece of common brown soap; proceed to rub the glove, commencing with the thumb, and as the flannel fingertip becomes dirty, change it till no dirt comes off the glove. After cleaning the front and back of the finger, open the finger and again lay it down flat, this time to clean the sides, otherwise you would find a streak of dirt when the glove is dry. After the fingers clean the palm and back, taking care no particle escapes, otherwise a streak will appear. When the glove is dry pull it out, and a white clean glove will be the result. Too much soap stiffens the glove; too much milk is equally objectionable.

PINE APPLE PRESERVE.—To every pound of fruit, weighed after being pared, allow 1lb. of loaf sugar and a quarter of a pint of water. The pines should be perfectly sound, but ripe. Cut them into rather thick slices, as the fruit shrinks very much in boiling; pare off the rind carefully, that none of the pine be wasted, and in doing so notch it in and out, as the edge cannot be smoothly cut without great waste. Dissolve a portion of the sugar in a preserving pan, with a quarter of a pint of water; when this is melted, gradually add the remainder of the sugar, and boil until it forms a clear syrup, skimming well. As soon as this is done, put in the pieces of pine, and boil well for at least half an hour, or until it looks nearly transparent, Put it into pots, cover down when cold, and store away in a dry place.

GOLDEN GRAINS.

IN communicating ideas to other minds be simple, natural, concise, and earnest.

BY Love's delightful influence the attack of ill-humor is resisted, the violence of our passions abated, the bitter cup of affliction sweetened, all the injuries of the world alleviated, and the sweetest flowers plentifully strewn along the most thorny paths of life.

LOVE does not go by words, and there are times when conventionality is impossible. There are people who understand one another at once. When one soul meets another, it is not by password, nor by hailing sign, nor by mysterious grip, that they recognise. The subtlest freemasonry in this world is this freemasonry of the spirit.

HAD I children, my utmost endeavors should be to make them musicians. Considering I have no ear, nor even thought of music, the preference seems odd, and yet it is embraced on frequent recollection. In short, as my aim would be to make them happy, I think it the most probable method. It is a resource which will last them their lives.

LIVE LIKE LOVERS.—Some people—men and women both—when they have got married, think they may do just as they please, and it will make no difference. They make a great mistake. It will cause all the difference in the world. They should be more devoted after marriage, if they have the slightest idea of being happy. It is losing sight of this fundamental truth which leads to hundreds of divorces.

YOUR IDEAL LADY.—When a young man is able to support a wife and a household, he should marry. But a few cautions may be suggested. He ought to consider what he has to give, as well as what he expects to receive. If he expects all the graces and virtues to reside in a woman—personal beauty, agreeable manners, intelligence, efficiency, prudence, good management, devoutness, affection—by what right does he lay claim to the heart of such an one? What rare creature are you, that such a paragon should be yours? Is it modest or manly to suppose that you have only to ask to receive? There is a wiser method of selecting a wife. Let one find in his own class and on his own level one who is fairly his equal. Let the partnership be equal. Do not ask her to bring everything, and you nothing. To marry your ideal woman may all be very well; but you will have to live with a real one.

HUMOROUS SCRAPS.

THE creditors of an absconding Yankee banker found, on opening his safe, that the only thing he had laid up for a rainy day was an umbrella.

A WORCESTER lady was prevented from attending the funeral of her aunt by being unable to prepare a mourning bustle in time. Had it been her mother-in-law's funeral she would have gone any way.

WHILE a Texas man was trying to anchor his mule to a stake, recently, the animal managed to get the rope around the man's neck, and then ran away at the top of his speed. The widow wants to sell the mule.

IN one of Lord Brougham's last speeches his false upper teeth fell out, and there was an embarrassing silence until they were restored, when he remarked that his teeth had given him a good deal of trouble ever since he had cut them.

A YOUNG drug clerk committed suicide a few days ago. At the inquest the coroner asked a fellow clerk of the deceased if he knew of any cause for the suicide. "No," was the reply; "he was getting along nicely, and was going to be married next month." "Going to be married, was he?" exclaimed the coroner. "That will do. We have got at the bottom of this business."

WHEN Handel once undertook, in a crowded church, to play the dismissal on a very fine organ there, the whole congregation became so entranced with delight that not an individual could stir till the usual organist came impatiently forward and took his seat, saying, in a tone of acknowledged superiority, "You cannot dismiss a congregation. See how soon I can disperse them!"

A REPORTER for a Western paper, speaking of a certain fair creature, remarked that "the profusion and color of her hair would lead one to look upon it as though it was spun by the nimble fingers of the easy hours, as they glided through the bright June days, whose many sunny rays of light had been caught in the meshes, and were contented to go no further." This is better than saying the girl's hair was red."

THERE was a great delicacy in the manner in which a foreigner, having a friend hung in this country, broke the intelligence to his relations on the other side of the water. He wrote as follows:—"Your brother had been addressing a large meeting of citizens, who had manifested the deepest interest in him, when the platform upon which he stood being, as was subsequently ascertained, very insecure, gave way, owing to which he fell and broke his neck!"

FOND OF "LOO."—A mild and affectionate wife in Lancaster overheard an acquaintance remark that her husband was too fond of loo. She waited up for him that night, and when he came home demanded to know if he had been spending his time with "Loo." The unsuspecting husband admitted that he had, when, without giving him time to explain, she went at him with a fire-shovel. The husband does not exactly remember how the interview ended, but he could never convince his wife that "loo" was a game at cards, and always plays whist now, and gets home before ten o'clock.

A WASHINGTON papers tells of an elegantly-dressed young lady who went into one of the dry goods stores on Pennsylvania avenue, bought a spool of cotton, and requested the proprietor to have it sent home. Overwhelmed with the important duty so suddenly thrust upon him, he immediately procured an express wagon and detailed a clerk, who, lifting the spool into the wagon, drove with it to the residence of the young lady, and, dismounting, rang the bell, and, when the door was opened, placed the spool upon his shoulder and carried it into the hall, and gently placed it on end, as if it had been a barrel of flour, and then retired. The consternation of the family can be imagined. The head of the house has been dodging in and out of the dry goods stores during the past week trying to find that clerk.

THE following dialogue occurred in the Faubourg St. Honoré, Paris, between a patriarchal gentleman and his granddaughter.

"What makes your hair so white, grandpapa?" inquires the maiden.

"I'm very old, my dear; I was in the ark," says grandpapa, humorously, but with a reckless regard for truth, which does not prepossess us in the old man's favor.

"Oh," says the child regarding her with a fresh interest, "are you Noah."

"No, I am not Noah."

"Are you Shem, then?"

"No, I am not Shem."

"Are you Ham?"

"No, I am not even Ham."

"Then you must be Japhet," says mademoiselle, at the end of her historical tether, and growing rather impatient of the difficulty that surrounded her aged relative's identification.

"No, I am not Japhet."

"Then, grandpapa, you are a beast!"

FAIR SPECIMEN OF AMERICAN NEWSPAPER REPORTING.—A couple of dogs were having a dispute on the opposite side of a slat fence in High-street, the other morning, when one of them, letting his valor get the better of his discretion, plunged his head through the slats, in hope of nipping his antagonist. That was where he made the mistake; the head went through nicely, but would not pull back. The other pup, seeing his foe was in chancery, leisurely commenced eating up the front part of his head and ears. There was "music in the air" about that time, and the yelping brought the juvenile owner to the rescue. He took in the situation at once, and freezing on to the dog's tail, and bracing against the fence, he pulled his level best. For a moment it was doubtful which would give way first, the tail, the head, or the picket; but with a final surge, the boy brought away the pup, minus the biggest part of both ears. The first jump that that dog made was something over 20 feet, and with a continuous wail of grief he disappeared around the corner.

A PROMINENT manufacturer of Springfield, Mass., has just been taught, at the expense of a broken carriage, the impropriety of meddling in other people's affairs. He was going to Chicopee; when about half way there he saw a cat and a black snake locked in a close embrace. The possibility of their being lovers at first occurred to him, but their wild and vicious manifestations convinced him that they meant war. Then his sympathies were enlisted for the cat, and as its ally, he procured a big stick, and brought it down with a terrific thwack, not upon the snake as intended, but upon the cat, which, with inconceivable rapidity, scratched him three or four times, and dashed between his horse's legs and out past his nose; whereat that sagacious beast materially increased his nose's safety by standing on his hind legs. Then he tipped the buggy over and set out for home while his master laughed hysterically and clapped both bloody hands to his shirt bosom, as the snake leaned up against the fence, and seemed to be trying to set a dog on the unhappy ally, as he trotted away.

OUR PUZZLER.

99. DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

Two gallant steeds both famed in story,
Each bore a hero on to glory.
The conqueror of a world my first bestrode,
As through the foeman's ranks he furious rode.
My second carried Albion's pride
That day when Gallia's star was pale,
And took its famous name
From a city all in flame,
As the roar of British guns swelled the gale.

1. Cold is the breeze of the northern sea,
But the ice breaks up, and the ship sails free.
2. A grim revenge and horrid feast,
His teeth in the skull of the traitor priest.
3. The white tents shine in the morning light,
And the warriors arm for the coming fight.
4. Last, softly beautiful as music's close,
Angelic woman into being rose.
5. A mightier arm than sword and shield,
Yet asks no strength its force to wield.
6. Better to seek in breezy fields for me,
Than to the doctor for me pay your fee.
7. The Church had launched its dreaded curse,
But not a soul seemed much the worse.
8. How speeds the good ship through the foam?
The fire burns brightly in many a home.
9. A gentle spirit of the stream,
Not free from human woe I ween.
10. Reformer of a nation's code,
Which ere he came was writ in blood.

R. F. V.

100. DOUBLE ACROSTIC.

A novelist in Britain born,
Whose writings literature adorn,
Initials name.
A work of merit by him penn'd,
Drawn with deep pathos to the end,
Finals proclaim.

1. An instrument much played of old.
2. A metal this, resembling gold.
3. Circle or orb, 'twill surely prove.
4. A bird—symbol of peace and love.
5. Old Priam's son, by serpents slain.
6. An English county, 'tis quite plain.
7. Here British valour won the day.
8. Name this wild animal, I pray.
9. Part of a theatre, in truth.
10. An Indian potentate, forsooth.

T. L.

101. SQUARE WORDS.

1. A knot; to accustom; the name of an English Queen; to urge; drove.

2. A place of restraint; inactive; worth; to deceive; an amphibious quadruped.

C. MARSH.

102. CHARADES.

1

Dreaming one fine summer day,
As close to the little brook sitting;
On a moss-covered bank by the way,
I watched the fleet swallows at play,
As over the stream they were flitting.

My first in the distance I heard,
As my second so slowly went round;
So still was the air, not a single leaf stirred,
And hum of the bee, or sweet song of the bird,
Mingled soft with my whole's pleasant sound.

2.

My second she was at our home,
We both lost our first when out walking;
She was so determined to roam,
So my whole it was no use talking.

B. A. I.

ANSWERS.

87. CHARADES.—1. Star-ling. 2. Part-ridge. 3. Par-rot. 4. Cow-lips. 5. Page-ant. 6. Chin-a. 7. Bride-groom. 8. Chaff-inch.

88. ANAGRAMS.—1. Charles Kingsley. 2. John Stuart Mill. 3. Robert Browning. 4. Thomas Carlyle. 8. Henry, Lord Brougham. 6. Douglas Jerrold.

89. SQUARE Words.—

1.	2.
O D E R	D E A L
D A R U	E B R O
E R I S	A R N O
R U S E	L O O P

90. NUMERICAL WORD PUZZLES.—1. Voice. 2. Woman. 3. Olive. 4. Clock.

WOMAN'S LOVE.

We want more love--pure, sympathetic, tender, long-suffering love; and that is the solution of one of the many social problems that day by day draw their geometrical intricacies closer and wider around and over us. This is only the solving of one problem in the ethical mystery of life. But it is the secret why so many homes are unhappy; why many sons and even some daughters turn out ill; why not a few marriages seem unblessed.

It is to women chiefly—we had almost said exclusively—that we look for this large-hearted love, tender, sympathetic, forbearing, and indulgent, that has in it so much of the nature of God, that whilst it does not encourage evil-doing, contemplates it in sorrow more than in anger, and does not spurn or drive to despair the doer. The world can sneer and censure and scoff at success and at failure, can find base motives in our holiest deeds, and has no mercy on our sins. Men and women want a haven of rest wherein they can lay aside the mask of society, or where the heart, maybe tortured with self-accusation, can find the comfort of sympathy in its sorrow, if not in its error, instead of the bitterness of reproach. Boys and girls who are brought up without such a tenderness, which so frequently marks a mother's love, are apt to be hard-natured and selfish and worldly and sharp. Young people are naturally less large-hearted and benevolent than their elders, and children exhibit little inclination to tenderness unless it is developed in them by example. The children of a gentle and affectionate mother are generally gentle and affectionate also.

We seldom meet with instances of children going astray when they are made the friends of their parents, and are not afraid to confess an error in ears indulgent with that large-hearted love of which we want more. The first error so confessed and corrected, if suppressed, would have arrested the first step in a downward career into a vale of evil, the depth and width of which is guesswork.

It is the love we want more of with which a mother first opens her arms to welcome back the prodigal son, smoothes his way to recommence an honorable career, who was looked upon as lost; or if he is irreclaimable, saves him from sinking into a yet lower abyss, and, worthless as he is in the eyes of the world, loves him, comforts him, and prays for him still.

The possession and exercise of this love that we want more of is woman's greatest and crowning right. In it lies her greatest power; without it, or at least the semblance of it, she becomes a cipher on the face of the earth, albeit she may have gained the point of female suffrage and a place in all the learned and unlearned professions. A woman of this type is kind and generous and gentle to all around her. The lady reformers of the present day seem to have overlooked it; and whilst professing to labor for the establishment of 'Woman's Rights,' seem to ignore the glaring fact that women are most downtrodden by women, and that their hardest usage is meted out to them by the tyrants of their own sex. Not only does the tyranny exist of mistress over maid, but very often that of maid over mistress, a growing evil in the present day, when good servants are scarce, competent ones independent, and gentlefolks seem afraid to give orders in their own houses Often, nowadays, must a guest go away empty rather than a servant be troubled to set a repast on table, or even to produce a cup of tea; and master and mistress themselves suffer considerable discomfort at times rather than incur the risk of a 'warning' for giving some trifling additional trouble. In such cases the so-called servant is actually the mistress of the situation. When women serve a mistress they are sure of a harder time than when they serve a master. So that reform in the social condition of women should be so far a woman's mission, that the sex should reform themselves—pull out the beam in their own eyes first. We want more large-hearted love, which frees the heart from pride and harshness, from envy and jealousy, from spite, meanness, and revenge; which sympathises with the wants and wishes and weaknesses of others; in short, 'does as it would be done by.'

The majority of well-meaning and good persons seem to think it indelicate to speak of love, especially as between the sexes. Prudish mothers prohibit the mention of marriage as something their daughters must not contemplate; so that instead of imparting their own wisdom to their girls in a matter of great importance to them, as the loving large-hearted mother would do, the young persons are driven to secret confidences in a matter sure to fill their minds, and very naturally so, with others similarly restricted, and no older or wiser than themselves, the result of all of which is very probably an imprudent flirtation and perhaps a clandestine and unsuitable match.

On the other hand, the match-making mother ignores the existence of love in favor of £ s. d. It is not only a foolish but a dangerous sentiment. Ridicule is a potent weapon, and if any primitive-minded and outspoken person ventures to mention it in her presence, she ridicules it as something too absurb to be supposed to exist at such an enlightened period of the world's history as the year of grace 18—, when women are going to be educated as they ought to be, and placed in their proper sphere at last. The match-making mother is anxious to saddle her girl on any mule who can carry the burden; her daughter, to her, is merely the subject of a monetary speculation, in which her future spouse is viewed much in the light of the Irish pig, which 'pays the rint, faix, an' a thrifle beyont, maybe.'

In both cases the growth of the heart is dwarfted; it withers or grows into a social, sometimes a moral, deformity.

Now it is a fact that men want love; not the mere dalliance of the moment, not the homage of flattery, but the repose and the comfort of all-enduring, all-forbearing, all-faithful love; or at least the gentle, patient, and indulgent tenderness that wears a great semblance of the genuine and heroic. Between woman and woman (unless indeed it be mother and child) and between man and man friendship may, but love cannot exist. Man craves the love of a sympathizing human creature, who will excuse his conduct and cherish him, no matter what his errors to the world may be. The hackneyed saying, 'With all thy faults I love thee still,' is as truly the motto of woman's real affection now as when it was first written by hands long ago crumbled into dust. It is in its spirit of devotion that a mother's love is often so perfect. A son errs—nay, disgraces himself and family; his father curses him, but his mother clings to him and prays for him. Often her prayers are heard, or even after long years of doubt, when the world has abandoned him as lost, receive their answer.

A sister's love if often as full of devotion as a mother's. Many a girl has suffered privation and toil to enhance the interests, or remained single to take care, of a good brother; and many a gentle woman has clung faithfully to a rascally brother sacrificing herself and her possessions and her hopes, nursing him in self-wrought sickness, and loving him to the last.

Many girls are trained simply to regard marriage as settlement or provision for them in life, and the husband as a necessary encumbrance in the arrangement. Such a girl has sold herself for the good things of this world, and thinks she has a right to demand them. Her husband must provide her a house at such-and-such a rent and in such-and-such a neighborhood; he must furnish it handsomely. She must have as many dresses and of as costly a description as she thinks she wants. She must visit and give parties as she considers fit. If he tries to control her expenses, or speaks of temporary economy, or hints about money embarrassments, it is merely his meanness; he wants to cut her down. She has sold herself for a price, and the price she will have. She pouts, and insists, and says hard things, and persists till her will is granted, Heaven knows at what cost. She makes no pretence of loving him, because that was not 'in the bond;' she only conceals her dislike of him because she is too well-bred to be rude; it creeps out when he refuses her monetary demands, to retire again when she is pacified by compliance. She has choked down and trampled on some girlish affection to marry him; or she has seen some one since to whom all her heart could have gone out, but she has shuddered and drawn up suddenly on the brink of a sin, and trampled it all out with a strong will; or she has simply never warmed in thought or feeling, but, wedded without regard to an uncongenial object, has gone on developing no affection, and devoid of happiness, till she is the very impersonation of a callous, selfish, haughty woman. Her husband cannot confide in her. If he tells her of business embarrassments, she raises her marked eyebrows scornfully, and says in hard metallic tones, 'Why did you not manage better?' and adds indifferently, and in a tone that says I don't want to discuss the subject any more, it bores me, 'I do not understand business.' In her mind, it is essential to her dignity to be quite ignorant of the business that engrosses nearly all her husband's thoughts and time, and by which she and her children are fed. Indeed, if any one asked her what her husband was, probably she would not know; 'Oh, he's a merchant or something or other in the City.' As he grows towards middle life, he feels the want of the repose of sympathy and affection more than when he was younger. He has had many hard rubs in life now. He is beginning to get way-worn and weary, aware of the hollowness of the world, and tired of the battle of life. Mercantile speculations are looking ugly; he wants to come to some haven of rest and comfort to refresh and invigorate him for continued struggles; he would gladly retire from the turmoil of City life; his luck seems changed; it would be well to give up before more is lost; but his wife exacts so much, her expenses are increasing at a moment when his income is diminishing, and she has always exacted so much, little has been saved. As he had gathered, so she has scattered. Then comes the crash. He goes home. To be comforted? No. To be reproached. What, give up their home? Sink into comparative poverty? How dare he propose it? He is a fool, he is an idiot, not to manage better. To drag her to poverty! To make her a scorn and a byword! To deprive her of a carriage, an establishment, and a retinue! Did she not marry him for it, and what is this downfall but a fraud on her? Their humbler home might be happy enough with love in it, but instead he only meets a soured, complaining, crossgrained creature. His own temper is none of the best; he has had no influence in his wedded life to improve it. Where she might forbear, she retorts; where she might soothe, she irritates. And what does he do? Seeks solace in the company of some more gentle if less-virtuous woman, with whom he finds the love, or at least the semblance of it, his soul craves; or he grasps the bottle and makes bad worse, till the terrible mad end; or he cuts the thread of life abruptly short, and a jury return a verdict of temporary insanity.

Many girls are forbidden to think of marriage or to mention love. They are "kept down" in the presence of their parents. A girl of such a sort procures absurd trashy love novels "on the sly;" she seeks out companions like herself, and interchanges confidences. Above all, she delights in the servants' company, and makes herself one of them. She pants to find she has a lover. Almost any one would be better than none, even the boy in buttons might do if a little taller. If she rides, she possibly encourages the groom. She marries clandestinely if she can. If it must be with papa's and mamma's sanction, she submits, sighing, but it would be much nicer to run away, she thinks. She believes herself very much in love. She belongs rather to a bygone generation, and is scarce at the present day. After she is married, she is proved to be very useless. She understands nothing of housekeeping nor apparel-making. She does nothing herself, and does not arrange for others to do it. Her house is in a muddle and her children neglected. Everybody about her is unruly and uncontrolled. She expects her husband always to play the lover. After twenty years of married life, she thinks he ought to address her and flatter her as he did when he was courting. At thirty she feels neglected at missing the compliments he paid her, and the admiring looks he gave her, at twenty. She has grown very slovenly in her attire, and not changed the date of her fashions since the wedding-day. She is mopy and limp and hysterical, and complains that "Augustus doesn't love her;" and his return home is heralded by a shower of briny drops; and whilst she goes into fits on the sofa—and he cannot be such a brute as not to bring her to—the fish gets broken and the meat burned and the adjuncts cold, so that dinner is spoiled. Her semblance of love is a hollow mockery. She keeps him dancing attendance on her, is unsatisfied unless he clasps her hand or talks rubbish; but he cannot discuss his real anxieties with her; he can place no confidence in a woman who would repeat all he said to every one she knew within four-and-twenty hours. What repose or comfort has he with her?

Or she is of the dressy sort; she goes to the extreme in fashion. She runs up bills on the sly and never thinks what they cost. She has always been sly, and is sly now. When they come in she hides them, till they can be hidden no longer; her husband quarrels with her; he declines to play the spoony after seven or seventeen years of marriage; and she, rendered still rather attractive by aid of paints and washes and flighty manners, flirts openly, by way of retaliation, with every fellow who has no objection. On the sly she goes farther, and either runs off altogether or is detected and divorced, to the eternal shame—loss it is impossible to say—of her unhappy children.

A large number of men of all ages certainly go astray from the simple want of love—indulgent motherly love, which a wife should, but does not always give, and which mother, sister, or fiancée may in some measure supply. Denied in their own homes what they might expect it to yield of solace and cheer, they too frequently find in a questionable quarter the indulgence and consideration they have looked for in vain elsewhere.

Too many women when they marry expect to find perfection in their husbands, ignoring the fact that they are not perfect themselves; and finding their respective Benedicts fall short of their ideal, become dissatisfied and cross.

Man is not only far from perfect, but his standard of excellence falls short of that of women. Therefore as the weaker morally, not as the stronger physically, is it that women should forbear with and defer to men. Men have much to contend with also in the way of excitement and disappointment, or anxiety, in their business transactions, which produce an irritability of temper it is best and kindest to soothe, not to increase.

Of such men as exercise a coarse brutality towards their wives, we say nothing. They do not deserve, and are hardly likely to receive, the love which we want more of. We cannot admit such scoundrels even to a moment's consideration, but reject them unconditionally as out of the pale of decent and ordinary consideration.

Women of pure and gentle rearing would do well to think over these things. They would do well to remember that we want more consideration and tenderness in the world, and they might often soothe a sister's hard way, comfort her in her trials, or save her from the bitter consequences to which her own folly is hurrying her. Men are not the only ones who suffer from the lack of sympathetic and kindly indulgence. Many a promising girl has been hurried to a regretful fate out of an uncongenial home. Many a wife has forgotten God and man under the weight of her burden; and many a pure holy-minded creature has walked a living sacrifice, as it were, barefooted over the sharp flints through life.

We want more love—pure, sympathetic, long-suffering love—and less censure and harsh judgment between relatives, near and dear it should be. God causes his sun to shine on the just and the unjust. The rain falls. The plenty or the scarcity prevails irrespective of individual merit. We do not suggest complete immunity from wrong, absence of all punishment. Nemesis exists hydra-headed; but it should not be by a man's fireside that he encounters the stroke of fate or the lash of judgment. There he looks to woman to be his stay and comfort. Let woman think a little more of this, and with God's blessing the getting of their "rights" will crop up out of it without a platform.

A BRAKESMAN'S DREAM.

"Ed" is a brakesman employed on the Chicago, Alton and St. Louis Railroad. He was married only a few weeks ago. His wife had been wearing a piece of red flannel round her neck for the last ten days and complaining of a wry neck. This is how it came to pass:

"Ed" had just been doing extra duty, taking a sick friend's train in addition to his own, and had not been in bed for forty-eight hours. As a matter of course he was nearly worn out, and as soon as his supper had been eaten he went to bed to sleep, perchance to dream. He was soon locked in the arms of Morpheus and Mary, and dreaming. Again his foot was on his native platform, and he heard the warning toot of the whistle for brakes. The shadowy train bore him swiftly on; the telegraph posts fleeted past quicker and quicker; the whole country fled like a panorama mounted on sheet lightning rollers. In his dream he heard far off another roar, and swinging out by the railings he saw another train coming at lightning speed around the curve. Both trains were crowded with passengers; in another moment they would rush together, and from the ruins a cry of agony would shiver to the tingling stars from the lips of the maimed and dying. The engineer had seen their danger; for at that moment, in his dream, he heard the whistle calling for brakes sound loud and unearthly. With the strength of desperation he gripped the brake and turned it down. There was yells of pain, and "Ed" woke to find himself sitting up in bed and holding his wife by the ears, having almost twisted off her head.

That's how "Ed's" wife came to wear a piece of red flannel round her throat and complain of a wry neck.—*Missouri Democrat.*

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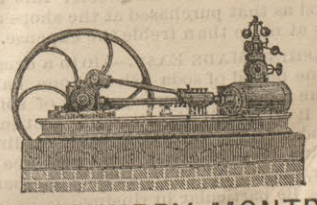

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